

THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA
DE SEINGALT



COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
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VOLUME TWO



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ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

She uncovered her bosom, not thinking it would give me any pleasure, but wishing to be politeFRONTISPIECE

The hours passed in jests and merriment, and when we sat down to supper I made the champagne corks fly I myself felt a little heated, and as I held each one's secret I had the hardihood to tell them that their scruples were ridiculous 1176

Although the air was cool, our heads were hot, and I conceived the idea of telling them that it would do them good to bathe their feet, and that if they would allow me I would take off their shoes and stockings. 1388

As soon as we had taken up our positions, I begged him to fire first Instead of doing so immediately, he lost two or three seconds in sighting, aiming and covering his head by raising the weapon before it I was not in a position to let him kill me at his ease, so I suddenly aimed and fired at him, just as he fired on me 1834

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CHAPTER 74

"M. DE VOLTAIRE," said I, "this is the happiest moment of my life. I have been your pupil for twenty years and my heart is full of joy to see my master."

"Honour me with your attendance on my course for twenty years more and promise me that you will bring me my fees at the end of that time."

"Certainly, if you promise to wait for me."

This Voltairean sally made all present laugh, as was to be expected, for those who laugh keep one party in countenance at the other's expense, and the side which has the laughter is sure to win, this is the rule of good society.

I was not taken by surprise; I had expected this and hoped to have my revenge.

Just then two Englishmen came in and were presented to him.

"These gentlemen are English," said Voltaire. "I wish I were"

I thought the compliment false and out of place, for the gentlemen were obliged to reply out of politeness that they wished they had been French or, if they did not care to tell a lie, they would be embarrassed to tell the truth. I believe every man of honour should put his own nation first.

A moment after Voltaire turned to me again and said that, as I was a Venetian, I must know Count Algarotti

"I know him, but not because I am a Venetian, as seven-eighths of my dear countrymen are not even aware of his existence."

"I should have said, 'as a man of letters'."

"I know him from having spent two months with him in Padua seven years ago, and what particularly attracted my attention was the admiration he professed for M. de Voltaire."

"That is flattering for me, but he has no need of admiring anyone."

"If Algarotti had not begun by admiring others, he would never have made a name for himself. As an admirer of Newton, he endeavoured to teach the ladies to discuss the theory of light."

"Did he succeed?"

"Not as well as M. de Fontenelle in his *Plurality of Worlds*; however, one may say he has succeeded."

"True. If you see him in Bologna, tell him I am expecting to hear from him about Russia. He can address the letters to my banker, Bianchi, in Milan, and they will be sent on to me."

"I will not fail to do so if I see him."

"I have heard that the Italians do not care for his style."

"No, all that he writes is full of French idioms, his style is wretched."

"But do not these French turns increase the beauty of your language?"

"They make it insufferable, as French would be, mixed with Italian or German, even though it were written by M. de Voltaire."

"You are right; every language should preserve its purity. Livy has been criticised on this account; his Latin is said to be tainted with patavinity."

"When I began to learn Latin, the Abbé Lazzarini told me he preferred Livy to Sallust."

"The Abbé Lazzarini, author of the tragedy, *Ulysse il giovine*? You must have been very young; I wish I had known him. But I knew the Abbé Conti well, the same that was Newton's friend and whose four tragedies contain the whole of Roman history."

"I also knew and admired him. I was young, but congratulated myself on being admitted into the society of these great men. It seems as if it were yesterday, though it is many years ago; and now in your presence my inferiority does not humiliate me. I wish to be the younger son of all humanity."

"Better so than to be the chief and eldest. May I ask you to what branch of literature you have devoted yourself?"

"To none, but that, perhaps, will come later. In the meanwhile I read as much as I can and try to study character on my travels."

"That is the way to become learned, but the book of humanity is too vast. Reading a history is the easier way."

"Yes, if history did not lie. One is not sure of the truth of the facts. It is tiring, while the study of the world is amusing. Horace, whom I know by heart, is my guidebook."

"Algarotti, too, has all Horace in his head. Of course you are fond of poetry?"

"It is my passion."

"Have you composed many sonnets?"

"Ten or twelve I like and two or three thousand which in all probability I have not read twice."

"The Italians are mad after sonnets."

"Yes; if one can call it a madness to desire to put thought into measured harmony. The sonnet is difficult because the thought has to be fitted exactly into the fourteen lines."

"It is Procrustes' bed and that's the reason you have so few good sonnets. As for us, we have not one, but that is the fault of our language."

"And of the French genius, which considers that a thought, when extended, loses all its force."

"And you do not think so?"

"Pardon me, it depends on the kind of thought. A witty saying, for example, will not make a sonnet; in French or Italian it belongs to the domain of epigram."

"What Italian poet do you like best?"

"Ariosto, but I cannot say I love him better than the others, for he is my only love."

"You know the others, though?"

"I think I have read them all, but all their lights pale before Ariosto's. Fifteen years ago I read all you had written against him, and I said that you would retract when you had read his works."

"I am obliged to you for thinking that I had not read them. As a matter of fact I had done so, but I was young. I knew Italian very imperfectly and, being prejudiced by the learned Italians who adore Tasso, I was unfortunate enough to publish a criticism on Ariosto which I thought my own, while it was only the echo of those who had prejudiced me. I adore your Ariosto."

"Ah! M de Voltaire, I breathe again. But be good enough to have the work excommunicated in which you turned this great man into ridicule."

"What use would that be? All my books are excommunicated; but I will give you a good proof of my retraction."

I was astonished! The great man began to recite the two fine passages from the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth cantos in which the divine poet speaks of the conversation of Astolpho with St. John, and he did it without missing a single line or committing the slightest fault against the laws of prosody. He then pointed out the beauties of the passages with his natural insight and with a great man's genius. I could not have had anything better from the lips of the most skilled commentators in Italy. I listened to him with the greatest attention, hardly daring to breathe and waiting for him to make a mistake, but I had my trouble for nothing. I turned to the company, crying that I was more than astonished and that all Italy should know what I had seen. "And I, sir," said the great man, "will let all Europe know of the amends I owe to the greatest genius our continent has produced."

Greedy of the praise which he deserved so well, Voltaire gave me the next day his translation of the stanza which Ariosto begins thus:

Quindi avvien che tra principi e signori.

The lines were as follows:

*Les papes, les Césars, apaisant leur querelle,
Jurent sur l'Evangile une paix éternelle;
Vous les voyez l'un de l'autre ennemis;
C'était pour se tromber qu'ils s'étaient réunis.*

*Nul serment n'est gardé, nul accord n'est sincère;
Quand la bouche a parlé, le cœur dit le contraire.
Du ciel qu'ils attestaient, ils bravaient le courroux;
L'intérêt est le dieu qui les gouverne tous.*

At the end of the recitation, which gained the applause of all who heard it, although not one of them knew Italian, Madame Denis, his niece, asked me if I thought the passage her uncle had just recited one of the finest the poet had written

"Yes, but not the finest."

"It ought to be, for, but for it, Signor Lodovico would not have gained his apotheosis."

"He has been canonized then? I was not aware of that."

At these words the laugh, headed by Voltaire, was for Madame Denis. Everybody laughed except myself, and I continued to look perfectly serious

Voltaire was vexed at not seeing me laugh like the rest and asked me the reason.

"Are you thinking," said he, "of some more than human passage?"

"Yes," I answered.

"What passage is that?"

"The last thirty-six stanzas of the twenty-third canto, where the poet describes in detail how Roland became mad. Since the world has existed, no one has discovered the springs of madness unless Ariosto himself, who became mad in his old age. These stanzas inspire honour, M. de Voltaire, and I am sure they must have made you tremble"

"Yes, I remember they render love dreadful. I long to read them again"

"Perhaps the gentleman will be good enough to recite them," said Madame Denis, with a side glance at her uncle.

"Willingly," said I, "if you will have the goodness to listen to me."

"You have learnt them by heart, then, have you?" said Voltaire.

"Yes, it was a pleasure and no trouble. Since I was sixteen, I have read over Ariosto two or three times every year; it is my passion and the lines have naturally become linked in my memory without my having given myself any pains to learn them. I know it all, except his long genealogies and his historical tirades, which fatigue the mind and do not touch the heart. It is only Horace that I know throughout, in spite of the often prosaic style of his epistles, which are certainly far from equalling Boileau's"

"Boileau is often too lengthy, I admire Horace but, as for Ariosto, with his forty long cantos, there is too much of him."

"It is fifty-one cantos, M. de Voltaire."

The great man was silent, but Madame Denis was equal to the occasion.

"Come, come," said she, "let us hear the thirty-six stanzas which earned the author the title of 'divine' and which are to make us tremble."

I then began, in an assured voice, but not in that monotonous tone adopted by the Italians with which the French so justly reproach us. The French would be the best reciters if they were not constrained by the rhyme, for they say what they feel better than any other people. They have neither the passionate, monotonous tone of my fellow countrymen nor the sentimentality of the Germans nor the fatiguing mannerisms of the English; to every period they give its proper expression, but the recurrence of the same sounds partly spoils their recitation. I recited the fine verses of Ariosto as if it had been rhythmic prose, animating it by the sound of my voice and the movements of my eyes and by modulating my intonation according to the sentiments with which I wished to inspire my audience. They saw how hardly I could restrain my tears, and every eye was wet; but when I came to the stanza:

*Poichè allargare il freno al dolor puote,
Che resta sola senza altrui rispetto,
Giù dagli occhi rigando per le gote
Sparge un fiume de lacrime sul petto,*

the tears coursed down my cheeks to such an extent that everyone began to sob. M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis threw their arms round my neck; but their embraces could not stop me, for Roland, to become mad, had to notice that he was in the same bed in which Angelica had lately been found in the arms of the too fortunate Medor, and I had to reach the next stanza. For my voice of sorrow and wailing I substituted the expression of that terror which arose naturally from the contemplation of this fury, which was in its effects like a tempest, a volcano or an earthquake.

When I had finished, I received with a sad air the congratulations of the audience. Voltaire cried:

"I always said so; the secret of drawing tears is to weep oneself, but they must be real tears and, to shed them, the heart must be stirred to its depths. I am obliged to you, sir," he added, embracing me, "and I promise to recite the same stanzas myself to-morrow and to weep like you."

He kept his word.

"It is astonishing," said Madame Denis, "that intolerant Rome should not have condemned *The Song of Roland*."

"Far from it," said Voltaire, "Leo X excommunicated whoever should dare to condemn it. The two great families of Este and Medici interested themselves in the poet's favour. Without that protection, it is probable that the one line on the donation of Rome by Constantine to Silvester, where the poet speaks of *puzza forte*, would have sufficed to put the whole poem under an interdict."

"I believe," said I, "that the line which has excited the most talk is that in which Ariosto throws doubt on the general resurrection. Ariosto," I added, "in speaking of the hermit who would have hindered Rhodomonte from getting possession of Isabella, widow of Zerbin,

paints the African who, wearied of the hermit's sermons, seizes him and throws him so far that he dashes him against a rock, against which he remains in a dead swoon, so that *al novissimo di forse fia desto*."

This *forse* which may possibly have been placed there only as a flower of rhetoric or as a word to complete the verse, raised a great uproar, which would doubtless have greatly amused the poet if he had had time!

"It is a pity," said Madame Denis, "that Ariosto was not more careful in these hyperbolical expressions."

"Be quiet, niece; they are full of wit. They are all golden grains, which are dispersed throughout the work in the best taste."

The conversation was then directed towards various topics, and at last we got to *L'Ecossaise*, which we had played at Soleure.

They knew all about it.

M. de Voltaire said that, if I liked to play it at his house, he would write to M. de Chavigni to send me Lindane and he himself would play Montrose. I excused myself by saying that Madame M— was at Bâle and that I should be obliged to go on my journey the next day. At this he exclaimed loudly, aroused the whole company against me and said at last that he should consider my visit as an insult unless I spared him a week, at least, of my society.

"Sir," said I, "I came to Geneva only to have the honour of seeing you and, now that I have obtained that favour, I have nothing more to do."

"Did you come to speak to me or for me to speak to you?"

"In a measure, of course, to speak to you, but much more for you to speak to me."

"Then stay here three days at least; come to dinner every day and we will have some conversation."

The invitation was so flattering and pressing that I could not refuse it with a good grace. I therefore accepted and I then left to go and write.

I had not been back for a quarter of an hour when a syndic of the town, an amiable man, whom I had seen at M. de Voltaire's and whose name I shall not mention, came and asked to be permitted to sup with me. "I was present," said he, "at your argument with the great man and, though I did not open my mouth, I should much like to have an hour's talk with you." By way of reply I embraced him, begging him to excuse my dressing-gown and telling him that I should be glad if he would spend the whole night with me.

The worthy man spent two hours with me without saying a word on the subject of literature, but to please me he had no need to talk of books, for he was a disciple of Epicurus and Socrates and the evening was spent in telling little stories, in bursts of laughter and in accounts of the various kinds of pleasure obtainable in Geneva. Before leaving me, he asked me to come and sup with him on the following evening, promising that boredom should not be of the party.

"I shall wait upon you," said I.

"Very good, but don't tell anyone of the party."

I promised to follow his instructions.

Next morning young Fox came to see me with the two Englishmen I had seen at M. de Voltaire's. They proposed a game of quinze, which I accepted, and, after losing fifty louis I left off, and we walked about the town till dinner-time.

We found the Duc de Villars at Les Délices; he had come there to consult Dr. Tronchin, who had kept him alive for the last ten years.

I was silent during the repast, but at dessert M. de Voltaire, knowing that I had reasons for not liking the Venetian government, introduced the subject; but I disappointed him, as I maintained that in no country could a man enjoy more perfect liberty than in Venice.

"Yes," said he, "provided he resigns himself to play the part of a dumb man."

Seeing that I did not care for the subject, he took me by the arm to his garden, of which he said he was the creator. The principal walk led to a pretty running stream.

"'Tis the Rhône," said he, "which I send into France."

"It does not cost you much in carriage, at all events," said I.

He smiled pleasantly and pointed out the principal street of Geneva and Mont Blanc, which is the highest point of the Alps.

Bringing back the conversation to Italian literature, he began to talk nonsense with much wit and learning, but always concluding with a false judgment. I let him talk on. He spoke of Homer, Dante and Petrarch and everybody knows what he thought of those great geniuses, but he did himself wrong in writing what he thought. I contented myself with saying that, if those great men did not merit the esteem of those who studied them, it would at all events be a long time before they had to come down from the high place in which the praise of centuries had placed them.

The Duc de Villars and the famous Tronchin came and joined us. The doctor, a tall, fine man, polite, eloquent without being a conversationalist, a learned physician, a man of wit, a favourite pupil of Boerhaave, without scientific jargon or charlatanism or self-sufficiency, enchanted me. His system of medicine was based on regimen and, to apply it, he had to be a man of profound science. I had been assured, but can scarcely believe it, that he cured a consumptive patient of a secret disease by means of the milk of an ass, which he had submitted to thirty strong frictions of mercury by four sturdy porters.

As to Villars, he also attracted my attention but in a way quite different than did Tronchin. On examining his face and manner, I thought I saw before me a woman of seventy dressed as a man, thin and emaciated but still proud of her looks and with claims to past beauty. His cheeks and lips were painted, his eyebrows blackened and his teeth false; he wore a huge wig, which exhaled amber, and at his buttonhole was an enormous bunch of flowers which touched his chin. He affected a gracious manner and spoke so softly that it was often

impossible to hear what he said. He was excessively polite and affable and his manners were those of the Regency. His whole appearance was supremely ridiculous. I was told that in his youth he was a lover of the fair sex but, now that he was no longer good for anything, he had modestly made himself into a woman and had four pretty pets in his employ, who took turns in the disgusting duty of warming his old carcass at night.

Villars was governor of Provence and had his back eaten up with cancer. In the course of nature he should have been buried ten years before, but Tronchin kept him alive with his regimen and by feeding the wounds on slices of veal. But for this, the cancer would have killed him. His life might well be called an artificial one.

I accompanied M. de Voltaire to his bedroom, where he changed his wig and put on another cap, for he always wore one on account of the rheumatism to which he was subject. I saw on the table the *Summa* of St Thomas and, among other Italian poets, the *Secchia Rapita* of Tassoni.

"This," said Voltaire, "is the only tragi-comic poem Italy has. Tassoni was a monk, a wit and a genius, as well as a poet."

"I will grant his poetical ability but not his learning, for he ridiculed the system of Copernicus and said that, if his theories were followed, astronomers would not be able to calculate lunations or eclipses."

"Where does he make that ridiculous remark?"

"In his academical discourses."

"I have not read them, but I will get them."

He took a pen and noted the name down and said, "But Tassoni criticised Petrarch very ingeniously."

"Yes, but he dishonoured his taste and literature thereby, as did Muratori."

"Here he is. You must allow that his learning is immense."

"*Est ubi peccat.*"

Voltaire opened a door and I saw a hundred great files full of papers.

"That's my correspondence," said he. "You see before you nearly fifty thousand letters, to which I have replied."

"Have you a copy of your answers?"

"Of a good many of them. That's the business of a servant of mine who has nothing else to do."

"I know plenty of booksellers who would give a good deal to get hold of your answers."

"Yes; but look out for the booksellers when you publish anything, if you have not yet begun; they are greater robbers than Barabbas."

"I shall not have anything to do with these gentlemen till I am an old man."

"Then they will be the scourge of your old age."

Thereupon I quoted a macaronic verse by Merlin Coccaius.

"Where's that from?"

"It's a line from a celebrated poem in twenty-four cantos."

"Celebrated?"

"Yes, and, what is more, worthy of being celebrated, but, to appreciate it, one must understand the Mantuan dialect."

"I could make it out if you could get me a copy."

"I shall have the honour of presenting you with one to-morrow."

"You will oblige me extremely."

We had to leave his room and spend two hours in the company, talking over all sorts of things. Voltaire displayed all the resources of his brilliant and fertile wit and charmed everyone in spite of his sarcastic observations, which did not even spare those present, but he had an inimitable manner of lancing a sarcasm without wounding a person's feelings. When the great man accompanied his witticisms with a graceful smile, he could always get a laugh.

He kept up a notable establishment and an excellent table, a rare circumstance with his poetic brothers, who are rarely favourites of Plutus as he was. He was then sixty years old and had a hundred and twenty thousand francs a year. It has been said maliciously that this great man enriched himself by cheating his publishers, whereas the fact was that he fared no better than any other author and, instead of duping them, was often their dupe. The Cramers must be excepted, whose fortune he made. Voltaire had other ways of making money than by his pen; and, as he was greedy of fame, he often gave his works away on the sole condition that they were to be printed and published. During the short time I was with him, I was a witness of such a generous action; he made a present to his bookseller of *The Princess of Babylon*, a charming story which he had written in three days.

My Epicurean syndic was exact to his appointment and took me to a house at a little distance, where he introduced me to three young ladies who, without being precisely beautiful, were certainly charming. Two of them were sisters. I had an easy and pleasant welcome and from their intellectual appearance and gay manners I anticipated a delightful evening, and I was not disappointed. The half hour before supper was passed in conversation, decent but without restraint, and during supper, from the hints the syndic gave me, I guessed what would happen after dessert.

It was a hot evening and, on the pretext of cooling ourselves, we undressed so as to be almost in a state of nature. What an orgy we had! I am sorry I am obliged to draw a veil over the most exciting details. In the midst of our licentious gaiety, whilst we were heated by love, champagne and a discourse of an exciting nature, I proposed to recite Grécourt's *Y Grec*. When I had finished the voluptuous poem, worthy of an abbé's pen, I saw that the eyes of the three beauties were all aflame, and said, "Ladies, if you like, I will show you all three, one after the other, why the sentence, *Gaudeant bene nati*, was uttered."

And, without waiting for their reply, I took them one after the other and . . . succeeded in making them happy. The syndic was radiant, he was pleased at having given me a present entirely to

my taste, and I fancied that the entertainment was not displeasing to the three Graces, who were kept low by the Sybarite, as his power was chiefly limited to desiring. The girls lavished their thanks on me, while I endeavoured to assure them of my gratitude; but they leapt for joy when they heard the syndic asking me to come next day.

As he was taking me back to my inn, I told him how great a pleasure he had given me, and he said he had brought up the three jewels himself.

"You," he added, "are the only man they know besides myself. You shall see them again, but I beg you will take care not to leave anything behind you, for in this town of prejudices that would be a great misfortune for them and for me."

"You are always moderate in your enjoyment, then?" I said to him.

"Unfortunately that is no merit as far as I am concerned. I was born for the service of love and Venus has punished me for worshipping her when I was too young."

After a good night's sleep I awoke in an active mood and began to write a letter to Voltaire in blank verse, which cost me four times the pains that rhymed verses would have done. I sent it to him with the poem of Teofilo Folengo, but I made a mistake in doing so, as I might have known he would not care for it, one cannot appreciate what one does not understand. I then went to Mr. Fox, where I found the two Englishmen, who offered me my revenge. I lost a hundred louis and was glad to see them set out for Lausanne.

The syndic had told me that the three young ladies belonged to respectable families but were not rich. I puzzled my head to think of some useful present I might make them without offending them and at last hit on a plan of the most ridiculous nature, as the reader will see. I went to a jeweller and told him to make me three golden balls, each of two ounces in weight.

At noon I went to M. de Voltaire's. He was not to be seen, but Madame Denis consoled me for his absence. She had wit, learning without pretension, taste and a great hatred for the King of Prussia, whom she called a "villain." She asked about my beautiful housekeeper and congratulated me on having married her to a respectable man. Although I feel now that she was quite right, I was far from thinking so then; the impression was too fresh on my mind. Madame Denis begged me to tell her how I had escaped from The Leads, but, as the story was rather a long one, I promised to satisfy her another time.

M. de Voltaire did not dine with us; he appeared, however, at five o'clock, holding a letter in his hand.

"Do you know," said he, "the Marquis Albergati Capacelli, senator of Bologna, and Count Paradisi?"

"I do not know Paradisi, but I know Albergati by sight and by reputation; he is not a senator, but one of the Forty, who at Bologna are fifty."

"Dear me! That seems rather a riddle!"

"Do you know him?"

"No, but he has sent me Goldoni's plays, the translation of my *Tancred* and some Bologna sausages and he says he will come and see me."

"He will not come, he is not such a fool."

"How a fool? Would there be anything foolish in coming to see me?"

"Certainly not, as far as you are concerned; but very much so for his own sake."

"Would you mind telling me why?"

"He knows what he would lose; for he enjoys the idea you seem to have of him and, if he came, you would see his nothingness, and goodbye to the illusion. He is a worthy man, with six thousand sequins a year and a craze for the theatre. He is a rather good actor and has written several comedies in prose, but they are fit neither for the study nor for the stage."

"You certainly give him a coat which does not make him look any bigger."

"I assure you it is not quite small enough"

"But tell me how it is with this "Forty" and this "fifty" of Bologna?"

"Just as at Bâle noon is at eleven."

"I understand; just as your Council of Ten is composed of seventeen members."

"Exactly; but the cursed Forty of Bologna are men of another kind."

"Why 'cursed'?"

"Because they are not subject to the fisc and are thus enabled to commit whatever crimes they like with perfect impunity, all they have got to do is to live outside the state borders on their revenues."

"That is a blessing and not a curse; but let me return to our subject. I suppose the Marquis Albergati is a man of letters?"

"He writes well enough, but he is fond of the sound of his own voice, his style is prolix and I don't think he has much brains."

"He is an actor, I think you said?"

"Yes, and a very good one, especially when he plays the lover's part in one of his own plays."

"Is he a handsome man?"

"Yes, on the stage, but not elsewhere; his face lacks expression."

"But his plays give satisfaction?"

"Not to persons who understand play-writing; they would be hissed if they were intelligible."

"And what do you think of Goldoni?"

"I have the highest opinion of him. Goldoni is the Italian Molière."

"Why does he call himself 'poet to the Duke of Parma'?"

"No doubt to prove that a wit as well as a fool has his weak points; in all probability the duke knows nothing about it. He also calls himself a barrister, though he is such only in his own imagination. Goldoni is a good play-writer and nothing more. Everybody in Venice knows

me for his friend and I can therefore speak of him with authority. He does not shine in society and, in spite of the keen satire in his works, he is of an extremely gentle disposition."

"So I have been told. He is poor and wants to leave Venice. The managers of the theatres where they play his pieces will not like that."

"People talked about getting him a pension, but the project has been relegated to the Greek Kalends, as they said that, if he had a pension, he would write no more."

"Cumæ refused to give a pension to Homer, for fear that all the blind men would ask for a pension."

We spent a pleasant day and he thanked me heartily for the copy of the *Macaronicon*, which he promised to read. He introduced me to a Jesuit he had in his household who was called Adam, and he added, after telling me his name, "not the first Adam." I was told afterwards that Voltaire used to play backgammon with him and, when he lost, he would throw the dice and the box at his head. If Jesuits were treated like that all the world over, perhaps we should have none but inoffensive Jesuits at last, but that happy time is still far off.

I had scarcely got to my inn in the evening when I received my three golden balls and, as soon as the syndic came, we set off to renew our voluptuous orgy. On the way he talked about modesty and said:

"That feeling which prevents our showing those parts which we have been taught to cover from our childhood may often proceed from virtue, but it is weaker than the force of education, as it cannot resist an attack when the attacking party knows what he is about. I think the easiest way to vanquish modesty is to ignore its presence, to turn it into ridicule, to carry it by storm. Victory is certain. The hardihood of the assailer subdues the assailed, who usually only wishes to be conquered and nearly always thanks you for your victory."

"Clement of Alexandria, a learned man and a philosopher, has remarked that the modesty which appears so deeply rooted in women's hearts really goes no farther than the clothes they wear and that, when these are plucked off, no trace of it remains."

We found the three girls lightly clad and sitting on a large sofa, and we sat down opposite to them. Pleasant talk and a thousand amorous kisses occupied the half hour just before supper and our combat did not begin till we had eaten a delicious repast, washed down with plenty of champagne.

When it was time to part, these girls, who had up till then led a life of privation, threw their arms round my neck, overwhelmed me with caresses and declared how much they owed me. The syndic told them I was going in two days and suggested they should make me stay a day longer in Geneva, and I made this sacrifice joyfully. The worthy syndic had an engagement on the following day and I sorely needed a holiday myself. He took me back to my inn, thanking me almost as heartily as his charming nymphs

After a calm and refreshing sleep of ten hours, I felt myself able to enjoy and appreciate the delightful society of M. de Voltaire. I went to his house but was disappointed in my hopes, as it pleased the great man to be in a fault-finding and sarcastic mood the whole day. He knew I had to leave on the morrow.

He began by thanking me at table for my present of Merlin Cocciaus.

"You certainly gave it me with good intentions," said he, "but I owe you no thanks for praising it so highly, as you made me waste four hours in reading nonsense."

I felt my hair stand on end but mastered my emotions and told him quietly enough that one day, perhaps, he would find himself obliged to praise the poem more highly than I had done. I quoted several instances of the insufficiency of a first perusal.

"That's true," said he, "but, as for your Merlin, I will read him no more. I have put him beside Chapelain's *Pucelle*."

"Which pleases all the critics, in spite of its bad versification, for it is a good poem and Chapelain was a real poet, though he wrote bad verses I cannot overlook his genius"

My frankness must have shocked him, and I might have guessed it when he told me he had put the *Macaronicon* beside the *Pucelle*. I knew that there was a poem of the same title in circulation which passed for Voltaire's, but I also knew that he disavowed it, and I thought that would make him conceal the vexation my explanation must have caused him. It was not so, however; he contradicted me sharply and I closed with him.

"Chapelain," said I, "has the merit of having rendered his subject matter agreeable without pandering to the tastes of his readers by saying things shocking to modesty and piety. So thinks my master Crébillon."

"Crébillon! You cite a weighty authority. But how is my friend Crébillon your master, may I ask?"

"He taught me to speak French in less than two years and, as a mark of my gratitude, I translated his *Rhadamiste* into Italian Alexandrines. I am the first Italian who has dared to use this metre in our language."

"The first? I beg your pardon, as that honour belongs to my friend Pierre-Jacques Martelli."

"I am sorry to be obliged to tell you that you are making a mistake"

"Why, I have his works, printed at Bologna, in my room!"

"I don't deny that; I am only talking about the metre used by Martelli. What you are thinking of must be verses of fourteen syllables without alternative masculine and feminine rhymes. However, I confess that he thinks he has imitated the French Alexandrines and his preface made me explode with laughter. Have you read it?"

"Read it? I always read prefaces, and Martelli proves there that

his verses have the same effect in Italian as our Alexandrine verses have in French."

"Exactly, that's what's so amusing. The worthy man is quite mistaken and I only ask you to listen to what I have to say on the subject. Your masculine verse has only twelve poetic syllables, and the feminine, thirteen. All Martelli's lines have fourteen syllables, except those that finish with a long vowel, which at the end of a line always counts as two syllables. You will observe that the first henustich in Martelli always consists of seven syllables, while in French it has only six. Your friend Pierre-Jacques was either stone deaf or very hard of hearing."

"Then you have followed our theory of versification rigorously."

"Just so, in spite of the difficulty, as nearly all our words end with a short syllable."

"What reception was accorded to your innovation?"

"It was not found pleasing, because nobody knows how to recite my verses, but I hope to triumph when I deliver them myself before our literary clubs."

"Do you remember any of your version of the *Rhadamiste*?"

"I remember it all."

"You have a wonderful memory; I should be glad to hear it."

I began to recite the same scene that I had recited to Crébillon ten years before, and I thought M. de Voltaire listened with pleasure.

"It doesn't strike one as at all harsh," said he.

This was the highest praise he would give me. In his turn the great man recited a passage from *Tancred*, which had not as yet been published and which was afterwards considered, and rightly, as a masterpiece.

We should have got on very well if we had kept to that, but, on my quoting a line of Horace to praise one of his pieces, he said that Horace was a great master who had given precepts which would never be out of date. Thereupon I answered that he himself had violated one of them, but that he had violated it grandly.

"Which is that?"

"You do not write *contentus paucis lectoribus*."

"If Horace had had to combat the hydra-headed monster of superstition, he would have written as I have written—for all the world."

"It seems to me that you might spare yourself the trouble of combating what you will never destroy."

"That which I cannot finish others will and I shall always have the glory of having been the first in the field."

"Very good; but supposing you succeed in destroying superstition, what are you going to put in its place?"

"I like that. If I deliver the race of man from a wild beast which is devouring it, am I to be asked what I intend to put in its place?"

"It is not devouring it; on the contrary, it is necessary to its existence."

"Necessary to its existence! That is a horrible blasphemy, the falsity of which will be seen in the future. I love the human race, I would fain see men free and happy, like myself, and superstition and freedom cannot go together. Where do you find an enslaved and yet a happy people?"

"You wish, then, to see the people sovereign?"

"God forbid! There must be a sovereign to govern the masses."

"In that case you must have superstition, for without it the masses will never obey a mere man decked with the name of monarch."

"I will have no monarch; the word expresses despotism, which I hate as I do slavery."

"What do you mean, then? If you wish to put the government in the hands of one man, such a man, I maintain, will be a monarch."

"I would have a sovereign ruler of a free people, of which he is the chief by an agreement which binds them both, which would prevent him from becoming a tyrant."

"Addison will tell you that such a sovereign is a sheer impossibility. I agree with Hobbes—of two evils choose the lesser. A nation without superstition would be a nation of philosophers, and philosophers would never obey. The people will be happy only when they are crushed and downtrodden and bound in chains."

"This is horrible; and you are of the people yourself. If you have read my works, you must have seen how I show that superstition is the enemy of kings."

"Read your works? I have read and re-read them, especially in places where I have differed from you. Your ruling passion is the love of humanity. *Est ubi peccas*. This blinds you. Love humanity, but love it as it is. It is not fit to receive the blessings you would lavish on it and which would only make it more wretched and perverse. Leave men their devouring monster; it is dear to them. I have never laughed so heartily as at Don Quixote assailed by the galley slaves whom his generosity had set free."

"I am sorry that you have such a bad opinion of your fellow creatures. And, by the way, tell me whether there is freedom in Venice."

"As much as can be expected under an aristocracy. Our liberty is not so great as that which the English enjoy, but we are content."

"Even under The Leads?"

"My imprisonment was certainly despotic, but, as I had knowingly abused my liberty, I am satisfied that the government was within its rights in shutting me up without the usual formalities."

"All the same, you made your escape."

"I used my rights, as they used theirs."

"Very good! But, as far as I can see, no one in Venice is really free."

"That may be; but you must agree that the essence of freedom consists in thinking you have it."

"I shall not agree to that so easily. You and I see liberty from very different points of view. The aristocrats, the members of the government even, are not free in Venice; for example, they cannot travel without permission."

"True, but that is a restriction of their own making, to preserve their power. Would you say that a Bernese is not free because he is subject to the sumptuary laws, which he himself has made?"

"Well, well, I wish the people made the laws everywhere."

After this lively answer he abruptly asked me what part I came from.

"From Roche," said I "I should have been very sorry to leave Switzerland without seeing the famous Haller. In my travels I render homage to my learned contemporaries and you come the last and best."

"You must have liked Haller."

"I spent three of the happiest days of my life with him."

"I congratulate you. He is a great man and worthy of all honour."

"I think as you do and I am glad to hear you doing him justice. I am sorry he was not so just towards you."

"Well, you see we may be both of us mistaken."

At this reply, the quickness of which constituted its chief merit, everybody present began to laugh and applaud.

No more was said of literature and I became a silent actor till M. de Voltaire retired, when I approached Madame Denis and asked if she had any commands for me in Rome. I went home well pleased at having, as I foolishly believed at the time, compelled the giant of intellect to listen to reason, but there was a rankling feeling left in my heart against him which made me for the next ten years criticise all that he wrote.

I am sorry now for having done so, though, on reading my censures over again, I find that in many places I was right. I would have done better, however, to have kept silence, respected his genius and suspected my own opinions. I should have considered that, if it had not been for those quips and cranks which made me hate him on the third day. I should have thought him wholly sublime. This thought alone should have silenced me, but an angry man always thinks himself right. Posterity, on reading my attack, will rank me among the Zoiluses and the humble apology I now make to the great man's shades may not be read.

If we meet in the halls of Pluto, the more peccant parts of our mortal nature purged away, all will be made up; he will receive my heartiest apologies; he will be my friend and I, his sincere admirer.

I spent part of the night and the whole of the following day in writing down my conversations with Voltaire, and they amounted to nearly a volume, of which I have given only a mere abridgment. Towards the evening my Epicurean syndic called on me and we went to sup with the three nymphs and for five hours indulged in every species of wantonness, in which I had a somewhat fertile imagination. On leaving I promised to call on them again on my return from Rome and I kept my word. I set out the next day, after dining with the syndic, who accom-

panied me as far as Annecy, where I spent the night. Next day I dined at Aix-in-Savoy, with the intention of lying at Chambéry, but my destiny ordered otherwise.

Aix is a villainous hole to which the mineral waters attract people of fashion towards the end of the summer, a circumstance of which I was then ignorant. I dined hastily, wishing to set out immediately for Chambéry, when in the middle of my repast a crowd of fashionable people burst into the room. I looked at them without stirring, replying with a nod to the bows which some of them made me. I soon discovered from their conversation that they had all come to take the waters. A gentleman of fine presence came up to me and asked if I were going to Turin; I answered that my way was to Marseilles.

Their dinner was served and everybody sat down. Among them I noticed several pleasant-looking ladies, with gentlemen who were either their husbands or their lovers. I concluded that I might find some amusement with them, as they all spoke French with that easy tone of good society which is so attractive, and I felt that I should be inclined to stay without much pressing, for that day at all events.

I finished my dinner before the company had come to the end of their first course and, as my coach could not go for another hour, I went up to a pretty woman and complimented her on the good the waters of Aix seemed to have done her, saying that her appetite made all who looked at her feel hungry.

"I challenge you to prove that you are speaking the truth," said she, with a smile. I sat down next to her and she gave me a nice piece of the roast, which I ate as if I had been fasting.

While I was talking with the lady and eating the morsels she gave me, I heard a voice saying that I was in the abbé's place and another voice replying that the abbé had been gone for half an hour.

"Why has he gone?" asked a third. "He said he was going to stay here for another week." At this there was some whispering, but the departure of an abbé had nothing interesting in it for me and I continued eating and talking. I told Le Duc, who was standing behind my chair, to get me some champagne. I offered the lady some, she accepted and everyone began to call for champagne. Seeing my neighbour's spirits rising, I proceeded to make love to her and asked her if she were always as ready to defy those who paid their court to her.

"So many of them," she answered, "are not worth the trouble."

She was pretty and quick-witted, and I took a fancy to her and wished for some pretext on which I could put off my departure, when chance came to my aid.

"The place next to you was conveniently empty," said a lady to my neighbour, who was drinking with me.

"Very conveniently, for my neighbour wearied me."

"Had he no appetite?" said I.

"Gamesters have an appetite only for money."

"Usually, but your power is extraordinary, for never before have I partaken of two dinners in one day."

"Only out of pride, as I am sure you will eat no supper."

"Let us make a bet on it."

"We will; we will bet the supper."

"All right."

All the guests began to clap and my fair neighbour blushed with pleasure. I ordered Le Duc to tell my coachman that I should not be going till the next day.

"It is my business," said the lady, "to order the supper."

"Yes, you are right; for he who pays orders. My part will be to hold my own with you and, if I eat as much as you, I shall be the winner."

"Very good."

At the end of the dinner, the individual who had addressed me before called for cards and made a small bank of faro. He put down twenty-five Piedmontese pistoles and some silver money to amuse the ladies—altogether it amounted to nearly forty louis. I remained a spectator during the first deal and convinced myself that the banker played very honourably.

Whilst he was getting ready for the second deal, the lady asked me why I did not play. I whispered to her that she had made me lose my appetite for money. She repaid this compliment with a charming smile.

After this declaration, feeling myself entitled to play, I put down forty louis and lost them in two deals. I got up and, on the banker saying very politely that he was sorry for my loss, I replied that it was a mere nothing, but that I always made it a rule never to risk a sum of money larger than the bank. Somebody then asked me if I knew a certain Abbé Gilbert.

"I knew a man of that name in Paris," said I. "He came from Lyons and owes me a pair of ears, which I mean to cut off his head when I meet him."

My questioner made no reply to this and everybody remained silent, as if nothing had been said. From this I concluded that the abbé afore-said must be the same whose place I had occupied at dinner. He had doubtless seen me on my arrival and had taken himself off. This abbé was a rascal who had visited me at Little Poland, to whom I had entrusted a ring which had cost me five thousand florins in Holland; next day the scoundrel had disappeared.

When everybody had left the table, I asked Le Duc if I were well lodged.

"No," said he. "Would you like to see your room?"

He took me to a large room, a hundred paces from the inn, whose sole furniture consisted of its four walls, all the other rooms being occupied. I complained vainly to the inn-keeper, who said, "It's all I can offer you, but I will have a good bed, a table and chairs taken there."

I had to content myself with it, as there was no choice.

"You will sleep in my room," said I to Le Duc. "Take care to provide yourself with a bed and bring my baggage in."

"What do you think of Gilbert, sir?" said my Spaniard. "I did not recognise him till he was going, and I had a lively desire to take him by the back of his neck."

"You would have done well to have satisfied that desire "

"I will when I see him again."

As I was leaving my big room, I was accosted politely by a man who said he was glad to be my neighbour, and offered to take me to the fountain if I were going there. I accepted his offer. He was a tall, fair man, about fifty years old; he must once have been handsome, but his excessive politeness should have made me suspect him; however, I wanted somebody to talk to and to give me the various pieces of information I required. One the way he informed me of the social standing of the people I had seen, and I learnt that none of them had come to Aix for the sake of the waters.

"I am the only one," said he, "who takes the waters from necessity. I am consumptive; I am getting thinner every day and, if the waters don't do me any good, I shall not last much longer "

"So all the others have come here only for amusement's sake?"

"And to game, sir, for they are all professional gamblers."

"Are they French?"

"They are all from Piedmont or Savoy; I am the only Frenchman here."

"What part of France do you come from?"

"From Lorraine; my father, who is eighty years old, is the Marquis Désarmois. He keeps on living only to spite me, for, as I married against his wishes, he has disinherited me. However, as I am his only son, I shall inherit his property after his death, in spite of him. My house is at Lyons, but I never go there, as I have the misfortune to be in love with my eldest daughter and my wife watches us so closely as to make my courtship hopeless."

"That is very fine; otherwise, I suppose, your daughter would take pity on her amorous papa?"

"I daresay, for she is very fond of me and has an excellent heart."

CHAPTER 75

THIS man, who, though he did not know me, put the utmost confidence in me, so far from thinking he was horrifying me by the confession of such wickedness; probably considered he was doing me a great honour. While I listened to him, I reflected that, though depraved, he might have his good points and his weakness might have a pitiable, if not pardonable, side. However, wishing to know more of him, I said, "In spite of your father's sternness, you live very well."

"On the contrary, I live very ill. I enjoy a pension from the govern-

ment, which I surrender to my wife, and, as for me, I make a livelihood on my travels. I play backgammon and most other games perfectly. I win more often than I lose, and I live on my winnings."

"But is what you have told me about your daughter known to the visitors here?"

"Everybody knows it; why should I hide it? I am a man of honour and injure no one, and, besides, my sword is sharp."

"Quite so; but would you tell me whether you allow your daughter to have a lover?"

"I should have no objection, but my wife is religious."

"Is your daughter pretty?"

"Very; if you are going to Lyons, you can go and see her; I will give you a letter of introduction to her."

"Thank you, but I am going to Italy. Can you tell me the name of the gentleman who kept the bank?"

"That is the famous Parcalier, Marquis de Prié since the death of his father, whom you may have known as ambassador at Venice. The gentleman who asked you if you know Abbé Gilbert is the Chevalier Zeroli, husband of the lady you are to sup with. The rest are counts, marquises and barons of the usual kind, some from Piedmont and some from Savoy. Two or three are merchants' sons and the ladies are all their friends and relatives. They are all professional gamblers and sharp-witted. When a stranger comes here, they know how to cajole him and, if he plays, it is all up with him, for they go together like pickpockets at a fair. They think they have got you, so take care of yourself."

In the evening we returned to the inn and found all the company playing, and my companion proceeded to play with a count de Scarnafisch.

The Chevalier Zeroli offered to play faro with me for forty sequins and I had just lost that sum when supper was served. My loss had not affected my spirits and the lady, finding me at once hungry and gay, paid the bet with a good grace. At supper I surprised her in certain side glances which warned me that she was going to try to dupe me; I felt myself safe as far as love was concerned, but I had reason to dread Fortune, always the friend of those who hold the bank at faro, especially as I had already lost. I should have done well to go, but I had not the strength; all I could do was to promise myself that I would be extremely prudent. Having large sums in paper money and plenty of gold, it was not difficult for me to be careful.

Just after supper the Marquis de Prié made a bank of about three hundred sequins. His staking this paltry sum showed me that I had much to lose and little to win, as it was evident that he would have made a bank of a thousand sequins if he had had them. I put down fifty Portuguese crowns and said that, as soon as I had lost them, I should go to bed. In the middle of the third deal I broke the bank.

"I am good for another two hundred louis," said the marquis.

"I should be glad to continue playing," I replied, "if I had not to go at daybreak," and I thereupon left the room.

Just as I was going to bed, Désarmoises came and asked me to lend him twelve louis. I had expected some such request and I counted them out to him. He embraced me gratefully and told me that Madame Zeroli had sworn to make me stay on at least for another day. I smiled and called Le Duc and asked him if my coachman knew that I was starting early; he replied that he would be at the door by five o'clock.

"Very good," said Désarmoises, "but I will wager that you will not go, for all that."

He went out and I went to bed, laughing at his prophecy.

At five o'clock next morning the coachman came to tell me that one of the horses was ill and could not travel. I saw that Désarmoises had had an inkling of some plot, but I only laughed. I sent the man roughly about his business and told Le Duc to get me post-horses at the inn. The innkeeper came and told me that there were no horses and that it would take all the morning to find some, as the Marquis de Prié, who had left at one o'clock in the morning, had emptied his stables. I answered that in that case I would dine at Aix, but that I counted on his getting me horses by two o'clock in the afternoon.

I left the room and went to the stable, where I found the coachman weeping over one of his horses stretched out on the straw. I thought it was really an accident and consoled the poor devil, paying him as if he had done his work and telling him I should not want him any more. I then went towards the fountain, but the reader will be astonished by a meeting of the most romantic character, but which is yet the strict truth.

At a few paces from the fountain I saw two nuns coming from it. They were veiled, but I concluded from their appearance that one was young and the other old. There was nothing astonishing in such a sight, but their habit attracted my attention, for it was the same as that worn by my dear M— M—, whom I had seen for the last time on July twenty-fourth, 1755, five years before. The look of them was enough, not to make me believe that the young nun was M— M—, but to excite my curiosity. They were walking towards the country, so I turned to cut them off that I might see them face to face and be seen of them. What was my emotion when I saw the young nun, walking in front and lifting her veil, disclose the veritable face of M— M—. I could not doubt that it was she and I began to walk beside her, but she lowered her veil and turned to avoid me.

The reason she might have for such a course passed in a moment through my mind and I followed her at a distance and, when she had gone about five hundred paces, I saw her enter a lonely house of poor appearance; that was enough for me. I returned to the fountain to see what I could learn adroitly about the nun.

On my way there I lost myself in a maze of conjectures.

"The too charming and hapless M— M—," said I to myself, "must

have left her convent, desperate—nay, mad—for why does she still wear the habit of her order? Perhaps, though, she has got a dispensation to come here for the waters; that must be the reason why she has a nun with her and why she has not left off her habit. At all events the journey must have been undertaken under false pretences. Has she abandoned herself to some fatal passion, of which the result has been pregnancy? She is doubtless perplexed and must have been pleased to see me. I will not disappoint her expectations; I will do all in my power to convince her that I am worthy of her."

Lost in thought, I did not notice I had arrived at the fountain, round which stood the whole host of gamesters. They all crowded round me and said how charmed they were to see me still there. I asked the Chevalier Zeroli after his wife and he told me she was still abed and that it would be a good thing if I would go and make her get up. I was just going when the doctor of the place accosted me, saying that the waters of the Aix would increase my good health. Full of the one idea, I asked him directly if he were the doctor in attendance on a pretty nun I had seen.

"She takes the waters," he replied, "but she does not speak to anyone."

"Where does she come from?"

"Nobody knows; she lives in a peasant's house."

I left the doctor and, instead of going towards the inn, where the hussy Zeroli was doubtless waiting for me, I made my way towards the peasant's house (which already seemed to me the temple of the most blissful deities), determined to obtain the information I required as prudently as might be. But as if love had favoured my vows, when I was within a hundred paces of the cottage, I saw the peasant woman coming out to meet me.

"Sir," said she, accosting me, "the young nun begs you to return this evening at nine o'clock; the lay sister will be asleep then and she will be able to speak to you."

There could be no more doubt. My heart leapt with joy. I gave the peasant woman a louis and promised to be at the house at nine exactly.

With the certainty of seeing my dear M— M— again, I returned to the inn and, on ascertaining which was Madame Zeroli's room, I entered without ceremony and told her that her husband had sent me to make her get up.

"I thought you were gone?"

"I am going at two."

I found her still more enticing in bed than at table. I helped her to put on her stays and the sight of her charms inflamed my ardour, but I experienced more opposition than I had anticipated. I sat down at the foot of the bed and told her how fervently I loved her and how unhappy I was at not being able to give her marks of my love before I left.

"But," said she, laughing, "you may stay if you wish."

"Give me some hope and I will stay till to-morrow."

"You are in too much of a hurry. Take things more quietly."

I contented myself with the few favours she granted me, pretending as usual to yield only to violence, when I was obliged to restrain myself on the appearance of her husband, who took the precaution of making a noise before he came in. As soon as she saw him, she said, without the slightest perturbation, "I have persuaded the gentleman to stay till the day after tomorrow."

"I am all the more pleased to hear it, my dear," said the chevalier, "as I owe him his revenge."

- With these words he took up a pack of cards, which came as readily to his hands as if they had been placed there on purpose, and, seating himself beside his wife, whom he used as a table, he began to deal.

I could not draw back and, as my thoughts were distracted, I kept on losing till they came to tell me dinner was ready.

"I have no time to dress," said the lady, "so I will have my dinner in bed if you gentlemen will keep me company."

How could I refuse? The husband went out to order dinner and, feeling myself authorized by the loss of twenty louis, I told the hussy that, if she would not give me a plain promise to make me happy that afternoon, I should go away when I had had my dinner.

"Breakfast with me to-morrow morning. We shall be alone."

After receiving from her certain earnestness of her promise, I agreed to stay on.

We dined by her bedside and I told Le Duc that I should not be going till the afternoon of the next day, which made the husband and wife radiant. When we had done, the lady said she would like to get up, and I went out, promising to return and play piquet with her. I proceeded to reline my purse and met Désarmoises, who said, "I have found out the secret; they gave your coachman two louis to substitute a sick horse for his own."

"It's a matter of give and take," said I. "I am in love with the chevalier's wife and I am putting off my departure till I have got all I want out of her."

"I am afraid you will have to pay pretty dearly for your pleasure. However, I will do what I can for your interests."

I thanked him smilingly and returned to the lady, whom I left at eight o'clock under pretext of a violent headache, after having lost ten louis to her. I reminded her of her promise for the next morning at nine o'clock and I left her in the midst of the company.

It was a fine moonlight night as I walked towards the peasant's house, where I was to see my dear M— M— once more. I was impatient to see what the visit, on which the rest of my life might depend, would bring forth.

I had taken the precaution to provide myself with a pair of pistols and my sword hung at my side, for I was not wholly devoid of sus-

picion in this place, where there were so many adventurers, but at twenty paces from the cottage I saw the woman coming towards me. She told me that the nun could not come down, so I must be content to enter through the window, by means of a ladder which she had placed there for the purpose. I drew near and, not seeing any light, I should not have easily decided on going up if I had not heard the voice I thought I knew so well, saying, "Fear nothing; come." Besides, the window was not very high up and there could not be much danger of a trap. I ascended and thought for certain that I held my dear M— M— in my arms, as I covered her face with my ardent kisses.

"Why," said I, in Venetian, "have you not a light? I hope you are going to inform me of an event which seems wonderful to me; quick, dearest, satisfy my impatience."

The reader will guess my surprise when he learns that, on hearing her voice close to me, I found that she was not M— M—!

She told me that she did not understand Venetian and that I did not require a light to tell her what M. de Coudert had decided on doing to save her from her peril.

"You surprise me; I do not know M. de Coudert. What! Are you not a Venetian? Are you not the nun I saw this morning?"

"Hapless one! I have made a mistake. I am the nun you saw this morning, but I am French. In the name of God keep my counsel and begone, for I have nothing to say to you! Whisper, for, if the lay sister woke up, I should be undone."

"Do not be afraid of my discretion. What deceived me was your exact likeness to a nun of your order who will be always dear to me; and, if you had not allowed me to see your features, I should not have followed you. Forgive the tenderness I showed toward you, though you must think me very audacious."

"You astonished me very much, but you did not offend me. I wish I were the nun in whom you are interested. I am on the brink of a fearful precipice."

"If ten louis are any good to you, it will be an honour for me to give you them."

"Thank you, I have no need of money. Allow me to give you back the louis you sent me this morning."

"The louis was for the peasant woman. You increase my surprise; pray tell me what is the misfortune under which you labour, for which money can do nothing."

"Perhaps God has sent you to my aid. Maybe you will give me good advice. Listen to what I am about to tell you."

"I am at your service and I will listen with the greatest attention. Let us sit down."

"I am afraid there is neither seat nor bed."

"Say on, then; we will remain standing."

"I come from Grenoble. I was made to take the veil at Chambéry. Two years after my profession, M. de Coudert found means to see

me. I received him in the convent garden, the walls of which he scaled, and at last I was so unfortunate as to become pregnant. The idea of giving birth to a child at the convent was too dreadful—I should have languished till I died in a terrible dungeon—and M. de Coudert thought of a plan for taking me out of the convent. A doctor whom he gained over with a large sum of money declared that I would die unless I came here to take the waters, which he declared were the only cure for my illness. A princess whom M. de Coudert knew was partly admitted to the secret and she obtained for me a leave of absence for three months from the Bishop of Chambéry, and the abbess consented to my going.

- “I thus hoped to be delivered before the expiration of the three months; but I have assuredly made a mistake, for the time is drawing to an end and I feel no signs of an approaching delivery. I am obliged to return to the convent and yet I cannot do so. The lay sister who is with me is a perfect shrew. She has orders not to let me speak to anybody and never to let my face be seen. She it was who made me turn when she saw you following us. I lifted my veil for you to see that I was she of whom I thought you were in search and happily the lay sister did not notice me. She wants me to return with her to the convent in three days, as she thinks I have an incurable dropsy. She does not allow me to speak to the doctor, whom I might, perhaps, have gained over by telling him the truth. I am only twenty-one and yet I long for death.”

“Do not weep so, dear sister, and tell me how you expect to be delivered here without the lay sister being aware of it?”

“The worthy woman with whom I am staying is an angel of goodness. I have confided in her and she promised me that, when I felt the pangs coming on, she would give that malicious woman a soporific, and thus we should be freed from all fears of her. By virtue of the drug, she now sleeps soundly in the room under this garret.”

“Why was I not let in by the door?”

“To prevent the woman’s brother seeing you; he is a rude boor.”

“What made you think that I had anything to do with M. de Coudert?”

“Ten or twelve days ago, I wrote to him and told him of my dreadful position. I painted my situation with such lively colours that I thought he must do all in his power to help me. As the wretched cling to every straw, I thought, when I saw you following me, that you were the deliverer he had sent.”

“Are you sure he got your letter?”

“The woman posted it at Annecy.”

“You should write to the princess.”

“I dare not.”

“I will see her myself and I will see M. de Coudert. In fine, I will move Heaven and earth, I will even go to the bishop to obtain an extension of your leave; for it is out of the question for you to return

to the convent in your present situation. You must decide, for I can do nothing without your consent. Will you trust in me? If so, I will bring you a man's clothes to-morrow and take you to Italy with me, and while I live I swear I will care for you."

For reply, I heard only long-drawn sobs, which distressed me beyond words, for I felt acutely the situation of this poor creature whom Heaven had made to be a mother and whom the cruelty of her parents had condemned to be a useless nun.

Not knowing what else to say, I took her hand and promised to return the next day and hear her decision, for it was absolutely necessary that she should decide on some plan. I went away by the ladder and gave a second louis to the worthy woman, telling her that I should be with her on the morrow at the same hour, but that I should like to be able to enter by the door. I begged her to give the lay sister a stronger dose of opium, so that there should be no fear of her awaking while I talked with the young nun.

I went to bed glad at heart that I had been wrong in thinking that the nun was M— M—. Nevertheless the great likeness between them made me wish to see her nearer at hand, and I was sure that she would not refuse me the privilege of looking at her the next day. I smiled at the thought of the ardent kisses I had given her, but I felt that I could not leave her to her fate. I was glad to find that I did not need any sensual motive to urge me to a good deed, for, as soon as I found that it was not M— M— who had received these tender kisses, I felt ashamed of having given them. I had not even given her a friendly kiss when I left her.

In the morning Désarmois came and told me that all the company, not seeing me at supper, had been puzzling itself to find out what had become of me. Madame Zeroli had spoken enthusiastically about me and had taken the jests of the two other ladies in good part, boasting that she could keep me at Aix as long as she remained there herself. The fact was that I was not amorous but curious as far as she was concerned, and I should have been sorry to leave the place without obtaining complete possession of her, for once at all events.

I kept my appointment and entered her room at nine o'clock exactly. I found her dressed and, on my reproaching her, she said that it should be of no consequence to me whether she were dressed or undressed. I was angry and took my chocolate without so much as speaking to her. When I had finished, she offered me my revenge at piquet, but I thanked her and begged to be excused, telling her that, in the humour in which she had put me, I should prove the better player and I did not care to win ladies' money. So saying, I rose to leave the room.

"At least be kind enough to take me to the fountain."

"I think not. If you take me for a freshman, you make a mistake and I don't care to give the impression that I am pleased when I am displeased. You can get whomsoever you please to take you to the fountain, but as for me I must beg to be excused. Farewell, madame."

With these words I went out, paying no attention to her efforts to recall me.

I found the innkeeper, and told him that I must leave at three o'clock without fail. The lady, who was at her window, could hear me. I went straight to the fountain, where the chevalier asked me what had become of his wife and I answered that I had left her in her room in perfect health. In half an hour we saw her coming with a stranger, who was welcomed by a certain M. de St. Maurice. Madame Zeroli left him and tacked herself on to me, as if there had been nothing the matter. I could not repulse her without the most troublesome consequences, but I was very cold. After complaining of my conduct, she said that she had only been trying me, that, if I really loved her, I would put off my departure and that I should breakfast with her at eight o'clock the next day. I answered coolly that I would think it over. I was serious all dinner-time and said once or twice that I must go at three o'clock, but, as I wanted to find some pretext for staying on account of the nun, I let myself be persuaded into making a bank at *faro*.

I staked all the gold I had and I saw every face light up as I put down about four hundred louis in gold and about six hundred francs in silver "Gentlemen," said I, "I shall rise at eight o'clock precisely." The stranger said, with a smile, that possibly the bank might not live so long, but I pretended not to understand him. It was just three o'clock. I begged Désarmoises to be my croupier and I began to deal with due deliberation to eighteen or twenty punters, all professional gamblers. I took a new pack at every deal.

By five o'clock I had lost money. We heard carriage wheels and they said it was three Englishmen from Geneva, who were changing horses to go on to Chambéry. A moment after they came in and I bowed. It was Mr. Fox and his two friends, who had played *quinze* with me. My croupier gave them cards, which they received gladly and went ten louis, playing on two and three cards, going *paroli*, seven and the *va*, as well as the *quinze*, so that my bank was in danger of breaking. However, I kept up my face and even encouraged them to play, for, God being neutral, the chances were in my favour. So it happened and at the third deal I had cleaned the Englishmen out and their carriage was ready.

While I was shuffling a fresh pack of cards, the youngest of them drew out of his pocketbook a paper which he showed to his two companions. It was a bill of exchange. "Will you stake the value of this bill on a card without knowing its value?" said he.

"Yes," I replied, "if you will tell me upon whom it is drawn and provided it does not exceed the value of the bank."

After a rapid glance at the pile of gold before me, he said, "The bill is not for so large a sum as your bank and is payable at sight by Zappata, of Turin."

I agreed, he cut and put his money on an ace, the two friends

I had only a dozen cards left.

"Sir," said I, calmly, to the punter, "you can draw back if you like."

"No, go on."

Four cards more, and still no ace, I had only eight cards left.

"My lord," said I, "it's two to one that I do not hold the ace. I repeat you can draw back."

"No, no, you are too generous. Go on."

I continued dealing and won; I put the bill of exchange in my pocket without looking at it. The Englishmen shook me by the hand and went off laughing. I was enjoying the effect of this bold stroke on the company when young Fox came in and, with a roar of laughter, begged me to lend him fifty louis. I counted them out with the greatest pleasure and he paid me them back in London three years later.

Everyone was curious to know the value of the bill of exchange but I was not polite enough to satisfy their curiosity. It was for eight thousand Piedmontese francs, as I saw as soon as I was alone.

The Englishmen had brought me good luck, for, when they had gone, Fortune declared for the bank. I rose at eight o'clock, some ladies having won a few louis, all the others were cleaned out. I had won more than a thousand louis and I gave twenty-five to Désarmois, who jumped for joy. I locked up my money, put my pistols in my pocket and set out towards the meeting-place.

The worthy peasant woman led me in by the door, telling me that everybody was asleep and that she had not found it necessary to renew the lay sister's dose, as she was still asleep. "I was alarmed at this," she said.

I went upstairs and by the light of a single candle I saw the wretched, veiled figure of the nun, extended upon a sack which the peasant woman had placed along the wall instead of a sofa. The candle which lighted this dreary place was fixed in a bottle.

"What have you decided on doing?" said I.

"I have decided on nothing, for an unforeseen incident has confounded us. The lay sister has been asleep for eighteen hours."

"She will die of convulsions or of an apoplectic fit to-night if you do not call a doctor, who may possibly restore her to life with a dose of castor oil."

"We have thought of that, but we did not dare to take that step for fear of consequences, for, whether he restores her or not, he will say that we have poisoned her."

"I pity you, upon my soul! Indeed, I believe that it is too late and that a doctor could do nothing. One must obey the laws of prudence and let her die. The mischief is done and I see no remedy."

"At any rate, we ought to think of her soul and send for a priest."

"A priest would do her no good, as she is in a perfect lethargy; her soul is safe enough. Besides, an ignorant priest would find out too much and tell the whole story through either malice or stupidity. It will be

time to call a priest when she has ceased to breathe. You must tell him that she died very suddenly; you must weep a great deal and give him a fee and he will think only of calming your grief, and nothing about the sudden death."

"Then we must let her die?"

"We must leave her to nature."

"If she dies, I will send a messenger to the abbess, who will dispatch another lay sister."

"Yes, and that will give you another ten days. During that time you may be delivered, and you will confess that every cloud has a silver lining. Do not grieve so, but let us endeavour to submit to the will of
• God. Send for the peasant woman, for I must give her some hints as to her conduct in this delicate matter, on which the honour and life of all three may depend. For instance, if it were discovered that I had come here, I might be taken for the poisoner."

The woman came and I showed her how necessary it was for her to be prudent and discreet. She understood me perfectly, perceived her own dangerous position and promised that she would not send for the priest till she was certain of the sister's death. I then made her accept ten louis in case of need.

Seeing herself made rich by my liberality, she kissed my hands, knelt down and, bursting into tears, promised to follow my advice carefully.

When she had left us, the nun began to weep bitterly, accusing herself of the murder of the lay sister and thinking that she saw Hell opening beneath her feet. I sought in vain to calm her; her grief increased and at last she fell in a dead faint on the sack. I was extremely distressed and, not knowing what to do, I called to the woman to bring some vinegar, as I had no essences about me. All at once I remembered the famous hellebore, which had served me so well with Madame M—, and, taking the little box, I held it to her nostrils. It took effect just as the woman brought the vinegar. "Rub her temples," said I. She took off her cap and the blackness of her hair was the only thing that convinced me it was not my fair Venetian. The hellebore having brought her to her senses, she opened her large, black eyes and from that moment I fell madly in love with her. The peasant woman, seeing that she was herself again and out of danger, went away and, taking her in my arms, I covered her with fiery kisses, in spite of her continuous sneezes.

"Please let me put on my veil again," said she, "or else I shall be excommunicated."

I laughed at her fears and continued to lavish my burning kisses on her face.

"I see you do not believe me, but I assure you that the abbess threatened me with excommunication if I let myself be seen by a man."

"Fear these bolts no longer, dear; they cannot hurt you."

But she sneezed more violently than ever and, fearing lest her efforts

in her care, promising to return at the same hour on the next day.

It would not have been like me to leave this interesting creature in her distress, but my devotion to her cause had no merit, since I was madly in love with this new black-eyed M— M—; and love always makes men selfish, since all the sacrifices they make for the beloved object are always ultimately referable to their own desires.

I had determined, then, to do all in my power for her and certainly not to allow her to return to the convent in the state she was in. I concluded that to save her would be an action pleasing to God, since God alone could have made her so like my beloved and God had willed that I should win a good deal of money and had made me meet la Zeroli, who would serve as a shield to my actions and baffle the curiosity of spies. The philosophers and mystics may perhaps laugh at me, but what do I care? I have always delighted in referring all the actions of my life to God, and yet people have charged me with atheism!

Next morning I did not forget la Zeroli and went to her room at eight and found her asleep. Her maid begged me to go in quietly for fear of awaking her and then left me and shut the door. I knew my part, for I remembered how, twenty years before, a Venetian lady whose sleep I had foolishly respected had laughed at me and sent me about my business. . . . La Zeroli wisely continued to sleep; but at last . . . was obliged to laugh at her stratagem. She told me that her husband had gone to Geneva to buy a repeating watch and would not return till next day and that she could spend the night with me.

"Why the night, dearest, while we have the day before us? The night is for slumber and in the day one enjoys double bliss, since the light allows all the senses to be satisfied at once. If you do not expect anybody, I will pass the whole morning with you."

"Very good; nobody will interrupt us."

I was soon in her arms and for four hours we gave ourselves up to every kind of pleasure, cheating each other the better to succeed and laughing with delight each time we convinced each other of our love. At last, she asked me, in return for her kindness, to spend three more days at Aix.

"I promise you," I said, "to stay here as long as you continue giving me such marks of your love as you have given me this morning."

"Let us get up, then, and go to dinner."

"In company, dearest? Look at your eyes."

"All the better. People will guess what has happened and the two countesses will burst with envy. I want everybody to know that it is for me alone that you are remaining at Aix."

"I am not worth the trouble, my angel, but so be it; I will gladly oblige you, even though I lose all my money in the next three days."

"I should be in despair if you lost; but, if you abstain from punting, you will not lose, though you may let yourself be robbed."

"You may be sure that I know what I am about and that I shall

allow only ladies to rob me. You have had some money out of me yourself."

"Yes, but not nearly so much as the countesses and I am sorry you allowed them to impose on you, as they no doubt put it down to your being in love with them."

"They are quite wrong, poor dears, for neither would have kept me here a day."

"I am delighted to hear it. But let me tell you what the Marquis of St. Maurice was saying about you yesterday."

"Say on. I hope he did not allow himself any offensive remarks."

"No; he only said that you should never have offered the Englishman to be off at eight cards, as you had as much chance as he and, if he had won, he might have thought that you knew the card was there."

"Very good, but tell the marquis that a gentleman is incapable of such a thought, and besides, I knew the character of the young nobleman and was almost sure he would not accept my offer."

When we appeared in the dining-room, we were received with applause. The fair Zeroli had the air of regarding me as her property and I affected an extremely modest manner. No one dared to ask me to make a bank after dinner; the purses were too empty and they contented themselves with *trente-quarante*, which lasted the whole day and cost me a score of louis.

I stole away as usual towards evening and, after having ordered Le Duc not to leave my room for a moment during my stay at Aix, I went towards the cottage, where the unfortunate nun was no doubt awaiting me anxiously. Soon, in spite of the darkness, I thought I made out somebody following me. I stopped short and some persons passed me. In two or three minutes I went on again, and saw the same people, whom I could not have overtaken if they had not slackened their pace. It might all be accidental, but I wanted to be sure about it. I left the road without losing my reckoning, feeling quite sure of finding my way when I ceased to be followed; but I soon felt sure that my steps were dogged, as I saw the same shadowy figures at a little distance off. I doubled my speed, hid behind a tree and, as soon as I saw the spies, fired a pistol in the air. I looked round shortly after, saw no one and went on my way.

I went upstairs and found the nun in bed, with two candles on the table.

"Are you ill?"

"I was ill for a time, but, praised be God! I am now quite well, having given birth to a fine boy at two o'clock this morning."

"Where is the child?"

"Alas! I did but kiss him once and my good hostess carried him away somewhere. The Holy Virgin heard my prayers, for my pains, though sharp, were soon over and a quarter of an hour after my delivery I was still sneezing. Tell me whether you are a man or an angel, for I fear lest I sin in adoring you."

One still breathes, but we have no hope that she will recover. Her face is terribly distorted. We have sinned exceedingly and God will punish me for it."

"No, dearest, God will forgive you, for the Most Holy judges by the heart and in your heart you had no evil thoughts. Adore Divine Providence, which doeth all things well."

"You console me. The peasant woman assures me that you are an angel, for the powder you gave me delivered me. I shall never forget you, though I do not know your name."

The woman then came and I thanked her for the care she had taken of the invalid. I again warned her to be prudent and above all to treat the priest well when the lay sister breathed her last, and thus he would not take notice of anything that might involve her in disaster.

"All will be well," said she, "for no one knows if the lay sister is well or ill or why the lady does not leave her bed."

"What have you done with the child?"

"I took him with my own hands to Annecy, where I bought everything necessary for the well-being of this lady and for the death of the other one."

"Doesn't your brother know anything about it?"

"Lord preserve us, no! He went away yesterday and will not be back for a week. We have nothing to fear."

I gave her another ten louis, begging her to buy some furniture and get something for me to eat on the morrow. She said she had still plenty of money left and I thought she would go mad when I told her that whatever was over was her own. I thought the invalid stood in need of rest and I left her, promising to return at the same hour on the following day.

I longed to get this troublesome matter safely over and knew that I could not regard myself as out of the woods till the poor lay sister was under the sod. I was in some fear on this account, for, if the priest was not an absolute idiot, he must see that the woman had been poisoned.

Next morning I went to see the fair Zeroli and found her and her husband examining the watch he had bought her. He came up to me, took my hand and said he was happy that his wife had the power to keep me at Aix. I replied that it was an easy task for her, and a "Bravo!" was all he answered.

The chevalier was one of those men who prefer to pass for good-natured rather than foolish husbands. His wife took my arm and we left him in his room while we proceeded to the fountain. On the way she said she would be alone the next day and that she would no longer indulge her curiosity as to my nocturnal excursions.

"Oh! it is you who have had me followed, is it?"

"No, it is I who followed you, but to no effect. However, I did not think you were so wicked. You frightened me dreadfully! Do you know, sir, you might have killed me if your shot had not luckily missed."

"I missed on purpose, dearest; for, though I did not suspect that it was you, I fired in the air, feeling certain that that would be enough to scare off the spies."

"You won't be troubled with them any more."

"If they like to follow me, perhaps I shall let them, for my walk is quite innocent. I am always back by ten."

While we were at table, we saw a travelling carriage and six horses draw up. It was the Marquis de Prié, with a Chevalier de St. Louis and two charming ladies, of whom one, as la Zeroli hastened to inform me, was the marquis's mistress. Four places were laid and, while the newcomers were waiting to be served, they were told the story of my bet with the Englishman.

The marquis congratulated me, telling me that he had not hoped to find me at Aix on his return, and here Madame Zeroli put in her word and said that, if it had not been for her, he would not have seen me again. I was getting used to her foolish talk and could only agree with good grace, which seemed to delight her intensely, although her husband was present, but he seemed to share her triumph.

The marquis said that he would make a little bank for me and, feeling obliged to accept, I soon lost a hundred louis. I went to my room to write some letters and at twilight set out to see my nun.

"What news have you?"

"The lay sister is dead and she is to be buried to-morrow. To-morrow is the day we were to have returned to the convent. This is the letter I am sending to the abbess. She will dispatch another lay sister, unless she orders the peasant woman to bring me back to the convent."

"What did the priest say?"

"He said the lay sister died of cerebral lethargy, which superinduced an attack of apoplexy."

"Very good, very good."

"I want him to say fifteen masses for her, if you will let me?"

"Certainly, my dear, they will serve as the priest's reward, or rather as the reward of his happy ignorance."

I called the peasant woman and gave her the order to have the masses said and bade her tell the priest that the masses were to be said for the benefit of the person who paid for them. She told me that the aspect of the dead sister was dreadful, and that she had her guarded by two women, who sprinkled her with holy water, lest witches, under the form of cats, should come and tear her limb from limb. Far from laughing at her, I told her she was quite right and asked where she had got the laudanum.

"I got it from a worthy midwife, an old friend of mine. We got it to put the poor lay sister to sleep when the pains of childbirth should come on."

"When you put the child at the hospital door, were you recognised?"

"Nobody saw me as I put it into the box, and I wrote a note to say the child had not been baptised."

"I did."

"You will, of course, see that the funeral is properly carried out?"

"It will cost only six francs and the parson will take that from the two louis which were found on the deceased, the rest will do for masses to atone for her having had the money."

"What! ought she not to have had the two louis?"

"No," said the nun, "we are forbidden to have any money without the knowledge of the abbess, under pain of excommunication."

"What did they give you to come here?"

"Ten Savoy sols a day. But now I live like a princess, as you shall see at supper, for, though this worthy woman knows the money you gave her is for herself, she lavishes it on me."

"She knows, dear sister, that such is my intention and here is some more to go on with."

So saying, I took another ten louis from my purse and bade the woman spare nothing for the invalid's comfort. I enjoyed the worthy's happiness, she kissed my hands and told me I had made her fortune and she could buy some cows now.

As soon as I was alone with the charming nun, whose face recalled to my memory the happy hours I had passed with M— M—, my imagination began to kindle and, drawing close to her, I began to talk of her seducer, telling her I was surprised that he had not helped her in the cruel position in which he had placed her. She replied that she was debarred from accepting any money by her vow of poverty and obedience and had given up to the abbess what remained of the alms the bishop had procured her.

"As to my state when I was so fortunate as to meet you, I think he cannot have received my letter."

"Possibly, but is he rich or handsome?"

"He is rich, but certainly not handsome. On the contrary, he is extremely ugly, deformed and over fifty."

"How did you become amorous of a fellow like that?"

"I never loved him, but he contrived to gain my pity. I thought he would kill himself and I promised to be in the garden on the night he appointed, but I went there only with the intention of bidding him begone, and he did so, but after he had carried his evil designs into effect."

"Did he use violence towards you, then?"

"No, for that would have been no use. He wept, threw himself on his knees and begged so hard, that I let him do what he liked, on the condition that he would not kill himself and would come no more to the garden."

"Had you no fear of the consequences?"

"I did not understand anything about it; I always thought that one could not conceive under three times at least."

"Unfortunate ignorance! how many woes are caused by it! Then he did not ask you to give him any more assignations?"

"He often asked me, but I would not grant his request because our confessor made me promise to withstand him thenceforth if I wished to be absolved."

"Did you tell him the name of the seducer?"

"Certainly not, the good confessor would not have allowed me to do so; it would have been a great sin."

"Did you tell your confessor the state you were in?"

"No, but he must have guessed it. He is a good old man, who doubtless prayed to God for me, and my meeting you was, perhaps, the answer to his prayers."

I was deeply moved and for a quarter of an hour I was silent and absorbed in my thoughts. I saw that this interesting girl's misfortune proceeded from her ignorance, her candour, her perfect innocence and a foolish feeling of pity, which had made her grant this monster of lubricity a thing of which she thought little because she had never been in love. She was religious, but from mere habit and not from reflection, and her religion was consequently very weak. She abhorred sin because she was obliged to purge herself of it by confession under pain of everlasting damnation, and she did not want to be damned. She had plenty of natural common sense, little wit, for the cultivation of which she had had no opportunities, and she was in a state of ignorance pardonable only in a nun. On weighing these facts, I foresaw that I should find it a difficult task to gain those favours which she had granted to Coudert; her repentance had been too bitter for her to expose herself to the same danger over again.

The peasant woman returned, laid the table for two and brought us our supper. Everything was new—napkins, plates, glasses, spoons, knives, etc., and everything was exquisitely clean. The wines were excellent and the dishes delightful in their simplicity. We had roast game, fish, cheese with cream and very good fruit. I spent an hour and a half at supper and drank two bottles of wine as I talked to the nun, who ate very little. I was in the highest spirits and the woman, delighted with my praise of her provision, promised I should be served the same way every evening.

When I was alone with the nun, whose face filled me with such burning recollections, I began to speak of her health and especially of the inconveniences attached to childbirth. She said she felt quite well and would be able to return to Chambéry on foot. "The only thing that troubles me is my breasts, but the woman assures me that the milk will recede to-morrow and that they will then assume their usual shape."

"Allow me to examine them; I know something about it."

"Look!"

She uncovered her bosom, not thinking it would give me any pleasure but wishing to be polite, without supposing I had any concealed desires.

would have restored Lazarus to life I took care not to offend her modesty, but in the coolest manner possible asked how she felt a little lower down and, as I put the question, I softly extended my hand. However, she kept it back gently, telling me not to go any further as she still felt a little uneasy. I begged her pardon and said I hoped I should find everything quite right by the next day

"The beauty of your bosom," I added, "makes me take a still greater interest in you."

So saying, I let my mouth meet hers and I felt a kiss escape as if involuntarily from her lips. It ran like fire through my veins, my brain began to whirl and I saw that, unless I took to a speedy flight, I should lose all her confidence. I therefore left her, calling her "dear daughter" as I bade her farewell.

It was pouring rain and I got soaked through before I reached my lodging. This was a bath well fitted to diminish the ardour of my passion, but it made me very late in rising the next morning. I took out the two portraits of M— M—, one in a nun's dress and the other nude, as Venus. I felt sure they would be of service to me with the nun.

I did not find the fair Zeroli in her room, so I went to the fountain, where she reproached me with a tenderness I appraised at its proper value, and our quarrel was made up in the course of our walk. When dinner was over, the Marquis de Prié made a bank, but, as he put down only a hundred louis, I guessed that he wanted to win a lot and lose a little. I put down also a hundred louis and he said it would be better sport if I did not stake my money on one card only. I replied that I would take a louis on each of the thirteen.

"You will lose."

"We will see. Here is my hand on the table and I stake a louis on each of the thirteen cards."

According to the laws of probability, I should certainly have lost, but fate decided otherwise and I won eighty louis. At eight o'clock I bowed to the company and went as usual to the place where my new love dwelt. I found the invalid ravishing. She said she had had a little fever, which the peasant woman pronounced to be milk fever, and she would be quite well and ready to get up the next day. As I stretched out my hand to lift the coverlet, she seized it and covered it with kisses, telling me that she felt as if she must give me that mark of her filial affection. She was twenty-one and I was thirty-five. A nice daughter for a man like me! My feelings for her were not at all of a fatherly character. Nevertheless, I told her that her confidence in me, as shown by her seeing me in bed, increased my affection for her and that I should be grieved if I found her dressed in her nun's clothes next day.

"Then I will stop in bed," said she, "and indeed I shall be very glad to do so, as I experience great discomfort from the heat of my woollen habit; but I think I should please you more if I were decently dressed; however, as you like it better, I will stop abed."

The woman came in at that moment, and gave her the abbess's letter, which her nephew had just brought from Chambéry. She read it and gave it to me. The abbess told her that she would send two lay sisters to bring her back to the convent and that, as she had recovered her health, she could come on foot and thus save money which could be spent in better ways. She added that, as the bishop was away and she was unable to send the lay sisters without his permission, they could not start for a week or ten days. She ordered her, under pain of the major excommunication, never to leave her room, never to speak to any man, not even to the master of the house, and to have nothing to do with anybody except with the woman. She ended by saying that she was going to have a mass said for the repose of the departed sister's soul.

"I am obliged to you for having shown me this letter, but be pleased to tell me if I may visit you for the next week or ten days without doing hurt to your conscience; for I must tell you I am a man. I have stopped in this place only because of the lively interest with which you have inspired me, but if you have the least objection to receive me on account of the singular excommunication with which you are threatened, I will leave Aix to-morrow. Speak."

"Sir, our abbess is lavish in these blunders and I have already incurred the excommunication with which she threatens me, but I hope it will not be ratified by God, as my fault has made me happy and not miserable. I will be sincere with you—your visits are my only joy and that joy is doubled when you tell me you like to come. But, if you can answer my question without a breach of confidence, I should like to know for whom you took me the first time you saw me; you cannot imagine how you astonished and frightened me. I have never felt such kisses as those you lavished on me, but they cannot increase my sin, as I was not a consenting party and you told me yourself that you thought you were kissing another."

"I will satisfy your curiosity. I think I can do so, as you are aware by this time that the flesh was weak, or rather stronger than the spirit, and that it compels the strongest intellects to commit faults against right reason. You shall hear the history of an amour that lasted for two years with the fairest and best of all the nuns of Venice."

"Tell me all, sir. I have fallen myself and I should be cruel and unjust if I were to take offence at anything you may tell me, for you cannot have done anything with her that Coudert did not do to me"

"I did much more and much less, for I never gave her a child. If I had been so unfortunate, I should have carried her off to Rome, where we should have fallen at the feet of the Holy Father, who would have absolved her from her vows and my dear M— M— would now be my wife."

"Good heavens! M— M— is my name."

This circumstance, which was really a mere coincidence, rendered our meeting still more wonderful and astonished me as much as it did

her. Chance is a curious and nickle element, but it often has the greatest influence on our lives

After a brief silence I told her all that had taken place between the fair Venetian and myself. I painted our amorous combats in a lively and natural manner, for, besides my recollections, I had her living picture before my eyes and could follow on her features the various emotions aroused by my recital. When I had finished she said, "But is your M— M— really so like me that you mistook me for her?"

Drawing from my pocketbook the portrait in which M— M— was dressed as a nun, I gave it to her, saying, "Judge for yourself "

"She really is; it might pass for my portrait. It is my dress and my face; it is wonderful. To this likeness I owe all my good fortune. Thanks be to God that you do not love me as you loved her, whom I am glad to call my sister. There are indeed two M— M—'s. Mighty Providence, all thy least ways are wonderful and we are at best poor, weak, ignorant mortals!"

The worthy peasant woman came up and gave us a still better supper than on the previous night. The invalid ate only soup, but she promised to do better by the following evening.

I spent an hour with her after supper and, by my restrained conduct, I convinced her of one error, namely, that I loved her only as a daughter. Of her own accord she showed me that her breast was regaining its usual condition. I assured myself of this fact by my sense of touch, to which she made no objection, not thinking that I could be moved by such a trifle. All the kisses which I lavished on her lips and eyes she put down to the account of my friendship for her. She said, smiling, that she thanked God she was not fair like her sister, and I smiled myself at her simplicity.

But I could not keep up this sort of thing for long and I had to be extremely careful. As soon as I felt that passion was getting the upper hand, I gave her a farewell kiss and went away. When I got home, Le Duc gave me a note from Madame Zeroli, who said she would expect me at the fountain, as she was going to breakfast with the marquis's mistress.

I slept well, but in my dreams I saw again and again the face of the new M— M—. Next day, as soon as I got to the fountain, Madame Zeroli told me that all the company maintained that I ought to have lost in playing on thirteen cards at once, as it was not true that one card won four times in each deal; however, the marquis, though he agreed with the rest, had said that he would not let me play like that again.

"I have only one objection to make to that, namely, that, if I wanted to play in the same way again, he could prevent me only by fighting for it."

"His mistress swears she will make you play in the usual way."

I smiled and thanked her for her information.

When I got back to the inn, I played a game of quinzé with the

marquis and lost fifty louis; afterwards I let myself be persuaded to hold a bank. I put down five hundred louis and defied Fortune. Désarmoises was my croupier and I warned the company that every card must have the stake placed on it and that I should rise at half-past seven. I was seated between two ladies. I put the five hundred louis on the board and got change from the innkeeper to the amount of a hundred crowns, to amuse the ladies with. But something happened.

All the cards before me were loose packs and I called for new ones. The innkeeper said he had sent to Chambéry for a hundred packs and the messenger would be back soon.

- "In the meanwhile," said he, "you can use the cards on the table, which are as good as new."

"I want them new, not 'as good as new.' I have my prejudices and they are so strong as to be invincible. In the meanwhile I shall remain a spectator, though I am sorry to keep the ladies waiting."

Nobody dared say a word and I rose, after replacing my money in my cashbox. The Marquis de Prié took the bank and played splendidly. I stood beside Madame Zeroli, who made me her partner and gave me five or six louis the next day. The messenger who was to be back soon did not return till midnight and I thanked my stars for the escape I had had, for in such a place, full of professional gamblers, there are people whose eyes are considerably sharper than a lynx's. I put the money back in my room and proceeded on my usual way.

I found my fair nun in bed and asked her, "How do you feel to-day, madame?"

"Say 'daughter'; that name is so sweet to me that I would you were my father, that I might clasp you in my arms without fear."

"Well, my dear daughter, do not fear anything, but open your arms to me."

"I will; let us embrace one another."

"How glad I am to find you in better spirits to-night!"

"You have given me back my happiness and I feel at peace once more. The woman told me that in a few days I should be just the same as if I had never seen Coudert."

"That is not quite true; how about your stomach, for instance?"

"Be quiet; you can't know anything about such things, and I am quite astonished myself."

"Let me see."

"Oh, no; you mustn't see."

"Why not? You can't be made differently from your sister, who would be now about thirty. I want to show you her portrait naked."

"Have you got it with you? I should so like to see it."

I drew it out and gave it to her. She admired it, kissed it and asked me if the painter had followed nature in all respects.

"Certainly," said I. "She knew that such a picture would give me pleasure."

"It is very fine. It is more like me than the other picture. But I suppose the long hair is put in only to please you?"

"Not at all. Italian nuns are allowed to wear their hair as long as they please, provided they do not show it."

"We have the same privilege. Our hair is cut once and then we may let it grow as long as we like."

"Then you have long hair?"

"As long as in the picture; but you would not like my hair, as it is black."

"Why, black is my favourite colour! In the name of God, let me see it."

"You ask me in God's name to commit a sin; I shall incur another, excommunication, but I cannot refuse you anything. You shall see my hair after supper, as I don't want to scandalise the good woman."

"You are right; I think you are the sweetest of your sex. I shall die of grief when you leave this cottage to return to your sad prison."

"I must indeed return and do penance for my sins."

"I hope you have the wit to laugh at the abbess's silly excommunications."

"I begin not to dread them so much as I used to."

I was in an ocean of bliss, for I foresaw that I should be made completely happy after supper.

The country woman came up and I gave her another ten louis, but it suddenly dawned upon me that she took me for a madman. To disabuse her of this idea, I told her that I was very rich and wanted to make her understand that I could not give her enough to testify my gratitude to her for the care she had taken of the good nun. She wept, kissed my hand and served us a delicious supper. The nun ate well and drank, but as for me, my soul was too contented and my heart too full of burning desire, I was in too great a hurry to see the beautiful black hair of this young woman, a victim of her own goodness of heart, and I could not follow her example. One appetite drove out the other.

As soon as we were relieved of the woman's presence, she removed her hood and let a mass of ebon hair fall upon her alabaster shoulders, making a truly ravishing contrast. She put the portrait before her and proceeded to arrange her hair like the first M— M—.

"You are handsomer than your sister," said I, "but I think she was more affectionate than you."

"She may have been more affectionate, but she had not a better heart."

"She was much more amorous than you."

"I daresay; I have never been in love."

"That is strange; how about your nature and the impulse of the senses?"

"We arrange all that easily at the convent. We accuse ourselves to

the confessor, for we know it is a sin, but he treats it as a childish fault and absolves us without imposing any penances."

"He knows human nature and makes allowances for your sad position."

"He is an old man, very learned and of ascetic habits, but he is all indulgence. It will be a sad day when we lose him."

"But in your amorous combats with another nun, don't you feel as if you would like her to change into a man?"

"You make me laugh. To be sure, if my sweetheart became a man I should not be sorry, but we do not desire such a miracle."

"That is, perhaps, due to a coldness of temperament. In that your sister was better, for she liked me much more than C— C—, and you do not like me as well as the sweetheart you left behind you at the convent."

"Certainly not, for with you I should violate my own chastity and expose myself to consequences I tremble to think of."

"You do not love me, then?"

"What are you saying? I adore you and I am very sorry you are not a woman."

"I love you, too, but your desire makes me laugh, for I would rather not be turned into a woman to please you, especially as I know I should not think you nearly as beautiful. Sit down, my dear, and let me see your fine hair flowing over your beautiful body."

"Do you want me to take off my chemise?"

"Of course. How handsome you look without it!"

She then said: "If such delights as these are allowed to friendship, I should say it is better than love, for I have never experienced so great pleasure as when you put your lips to my bosom. Let me do the same to you."

"I wish you could, but you will find nothing there."

"Never mind; it will amuse us."

After she had fulfilled her desire, we spent a quarter of an hour in mutual embraces and my excitement was more than I could bear.

"Tell me truly," said I, "amidst our kisses, amidst these ecstasies which we call childlike, do you not feel a desire for something more?"

"I confess that I do, but such desires are sinful; and, as I am sure that your passions are as high as mine, I think we had better stop our agreeable employment; for papa dear, our friendship is becoming burning love, is it not?"

"Yes, love, and love that cannot be overcome."

"I know it."

"If you know it, let us perform to love the sweetest of all sacrifices."

"No, no; on the contrary, let us stop and be more prudent in future, lest we become the victims of love. If you love me, you should say so, too."

With these words she slipped gently from my arms, put back her beautiful hair under her cap and, when I had helped her on with her

chemise, the coarseness of which horrified me, I told her she need not be afraid. I told her how sorry I felt to see her delicate body frayed by so coarse a stuff, and she told me it was of the usual material and that all the nuns wore chemises of the same kind.

My mind was in a state of consternation, for the constraint I had imposed on myself seemed much greater than the utmost pleasure I could have gained. I determined neither on persevering nor on abandoning the pursuit, but I wanted to be sure that I should not encounter the least resistance. A folded rose leaf spoilt the repose of the famous Smindyrides, who loved a soft bed. I preferred, therefore, to go away, rather than risk finding the rose leaf which troubled the voluptuous Sybarite. I left the cottage in love and unhappy, and, as I did not go to bed till two o'clock in the morning, I slept till midday.

When I woke up, Le Duc gave me a note which he should have given me the night before. He had forgotten it and I was not sorry. The note came from Madame Zeroli, who said she would expect me at nine o'clock in the morning, as she would be alone. She told me that she was going to give a supper party, that she was sure I would come and that, as she was leaving Aix directly after, she counted on my accompanying her—at any rate, as far as Chambéry. Although I still liked her, her pretensions made me laugh. It was too late now to be with her at nine, I could not go to her supper partly because of my fair nun, whom I would not have left just then for the seraglio of the Grand Turk, and it was impossible for me to accompany her to Chambéry, as, when I came back, I might no longer find the only object which kept me at Aix.

However, as soon as I had finished dressing, I went to see her and found her furious. I excused myself by saying that I had received her letter only an hour before, but she went away without giving me time to tell her that I could not sup with her or go to Chambéry with her. She scowled at me at table, and, when the meal was over, the Marquis de Prié told me that they had some new cards and that everybody was longing to see me make a bank. I went for my money and made a bank of five hundred louis. At seven o'clock I had lost more than half that sum but, for all that, I put the rest in my pocket and rose from the table.

After a sad glance in the direction of Madame Zeroli, I went to the cottage, where I found my angel in a large, new bed, with a small but pretty bed beside it which was meant for me. I laughed at the incongruity of these pieces of furniture with our surroundings, but, by way of thanking the thoughtful country woman, I drew fifty louis from my purse and gave them to her, telling her it was for the remainder of the time the lady was with her, and I told her to spend no more money in furniture.

This was done in true gamester fashion. I had lost nearly three hundred louis, but I had risked more than five hundred and I looked on the difference as pure profit. If I had gained as much as I had lost, I

should probably have contented myself with giving her ten louis, but I imagined I was losing the fifty louis on a card. I have always liked spending money, but I have never been careless with it except in gaming.

I was in an ecstasy to see the face of my M— M— light up with delight and astonishment.

"You must be very rich," said she.

"Don't think it, dearest, but I love you passionately, and, not being able to give you anything by reason of your unfortunate vow of poverty, I lavish what I possess on this worthy woman, to induce her to spare nothing for your comfort while you are here. Perhaps, too, without realising it, my heart is hoping it will indirectly make you love me more."

"How can I love you more than I do? The only thing that makes me unhappy is the idea of returning to the convent."

"But you told me yesterday that it was exactly that idea which made you happy."

"I have changed my mind since yesterday. I passed a cruel night, for, as soon as I fell asleep, I was in your arms and I awoke again and again on the point of consummating the greatest of crimes."

"You did not put up such a struggle before you committed the same crime with a man you did not love."

"It is exactly because I did not love him that my sin struck me as venial. Do you understand what I mean?"

"It's a piece of superstitious metaphysics, but I understand you perfectly."

"You have made me happy and I feel very grateful to you, and I feel glad and certain of conquering when I reflect that your situation is different to mine."

"I will not dispute it with you, although I am sorry for what you say."

"Why?"

"Because you think yourself in duty bound to refuse caresses which would not hurt you and which would give me new life and happiness."

"I have thought it over."

"Are you weeping?"

"Yes, and what is more, these tears are dear to me."

"I do not understand."

"I have two favours to ask of you."

"Say on, and be sure you will obtain what you ask."

CHAPTER 76

"YESTERDAY," said the charming nun, "you left in my hands the two portraits of my Venetian sister. I want you to give them to me."

"They are yours."

"I thank you. My second favour is, that you will be good enough to take my portrait in exchange; you shall have it to-morrow."

"I shall be delighted. It will be the most precious of all my jewels, but I wonder how you can ask me to take it as a favour, whereas you are doing me a favour I should never dare to demand. How shall I make myself worthy of giving you my portrait?"

"Ah, dearest! it would be a dear possession, but God preserve me from having it at the convent!"

"I will get myself painted under the costume of St. Louis of Gonzaga or St. Anthony of Padua."

"I shall be damned eternally."

"We will say no more about it."

She had on a dimity corset, trimmed with red ribbon, and a cambric chemise. I was surprised but politeness did not allow me to ask where they came from, so I contented myself with staring at them. She guessed my thoughts and said, smilingly, that it was a present from the peasant woman.

"Seeing her fortune made, the worthy woman tries in every possible way to convince her benefactor that she is grateful to him. Look at the bed; she was certainly thinking of you; and look at these fine materials! I confess I enjoy their softness extremely. I shall sleep better to-night if I am not plagued by those seductive dreams which tormented me last night."

"Do you think that the bed and the fine linen will deliver you from the dreams you fear?"

"No doubt they will have a contrary effect, for softness irritates the passions. I shall leave everything with the good woman. I do not know what they would say if I took them with me to the convent."

"You are not so comfortable there?"

"Oh, no! A straw bed, a couple of blankets and sometimes, as a great favour, a thin mattress and two coarse sheets. But you seem sad, you were so happy yesterday."

"How can I be happy when I can no longer fondle you without the risk of making you unhappy."

"You should have said 'without giving me the greatest delight'."

"Then will you consent to receive pleasure in return for that which you give me?"

"But yours is innocent and mine is not."

"What would you do, then, if mine and yours were the same?"

"You might have made me wretched yesterday, for I could not have refused you anything."

"Why 'wretched'? You would have had none of those dreams but would have enjoyed a quiet night. I am very sorry the peasant woman has given you that corset, as otherwise I might at least have seen my little pets without fear of bad dreams."

"But you must not be angry with the good woman, for she knows that a corset is easy to unlace. And I cannot bear to see you sad."

With these words she turned her ardent gaze upon me and I covered her with kisses which she returned with interest. The country woman came up to lay the pretty new table just as I was taking off her corset without her offering the least resistance.

This good omen put me in high spirits, but, as I looked at her, I saw a shadow passing across her face. I took care not to ask her the reason, for I guessed what was the matter and I did not wish to discuss those vows which religion and honour should have made inviolable. To distract her mind from these thoughts, I made her eat by the example I set, and she drank the excellent claret with as much pleasure as I, not thinking that, as she was not used to it, it would put her in a frame of mind not favourable to continence. But she did not notice this, for her gaiety made her look prettier than before and aroused her passions.

When we were alone, I congratulated her on her high spirits, telling her that my sadness had fled before her gaiety and that the hours I could spend with her would be all too short.

"I would be blithe," said she, "if it were only to please you."

"Then grant me the favour you accorded me yesterday evening."

"I would rather incur all the excommunications in the world than run the risk of appearing unjust to you. Take me!"

So saying, she took off her cap and let down her beautiful hair. I unlaced her corset and in the twinkling of an eye I had before me such a siren as one sees on the canvas of Correggio. I could not look upon her long without covering her with my burning kisses and, communicating my ardour, before long she made a place for me beside her. I felt that there was no time for thinking, that nature had spoken out and that love bade me seize the opportunity offered by that delicious weakness.

But in the midst of these joys she turned her head, closed her eyelids and fell asleep.

It was quite light when I got home. Le Duc had not gone to bed and gave me a letter from the fair Zeroli, telling me that it had been delivered at eleven o'clock. I had not gone to her supper and I had not escorted her to Chambéry; I had not had time to give her a moment's thought. I was sorry, but I could not do anything. I opened her letter, which consisted of only six lines, but they were pregnant ones. She advised me never to go to Turin, for, if I went there, she would find means to take vengeance on me for the dastardly affront I had put upon her. She reproached me with having put her to public shame, said I had dishonoured her and vowed she would never forgive me. I did not distress myself to any great extent; I tore up the friendly missive and, after I had my hair done, I went to the fountain.

Everybody flew at me for not having been at Madame Zeroli's supper. I defended myself as best I could, but my excuses were rather lame, about which I did not trouble myself. I was told that all was known and this amused me, as I was aware that nothing was known. The mar-

quis's mistress took hold of my arm and told me, without any circumlocution, that I had the reputation of being inconstant, and by way of reply I observed politely that I was wrongfully accused, but that, if there was any ground for the remark, it was because I had never served so sweet a lady as herself. She was flattered by my compliment and I bit my lip when I heard her ask in the most gracious manner why I did not breakfast sometimes with the marquis.

"I was afraid of disturbing him," said I.

"How do you mean?"

"I should be interrupting him in his business."

"He has no business and he would be delighted to see you. Come to-morrow; he always breakfasts in my room."

This lady was the widow of a gentleman of quality; she was young, undoubtedly pretty and possessing in perfection the jargon of good society; nevertheless, she did not attract me. After recently enjoying the fair Zeroli and finding my suit with the fair nun at the height of its prosperity, I was naturally hard to please—in plain words, I was perfectly contented with my situation. For all that, I had foolishly placed myself in such a position that I was obliged to give her to understand that she had delighted me by her preference.

She asked the marquis if she could return to the inn.

"Yes," said he, "but I have some business in hand and cannot come with you."

"Would you be kind enough to escort me?" said she to me. I bowed in assent.

On the way she told me that, if Madame Zeroli were still there, she would not have dared to take my arm. I could only reply by equivocating, as I had no wish to embark in a fresh intrigue. However, I had no choice; I was obliged to accompany her to her room and sit down beside her; but, as I had had no sleep the night before, I felt tired and began to yawn, which was not flattering for the lady. I excused myself to the best of my ability, telling her that I was ill, and she believed me, or pretended to believe me. But I felt sleep stealing upon me and I should have infallibly dropped off if it had not been for my hellebore, which kept me awake by making me sneeze.

The marquis came in, and after a thousand compliments he proposed a game of quinze. I begged him to excuse me and the lady backed me up, saying I could not possibly play in the midst of such a sneezing fit. We went down to dinner and afterwards I readily consented to make a bank, as I was vexed at my loss of the day before. As usual, I staked five hundred louis and about seven o'clock, though two-thirds of the bank had gone, I announced the last deal. The marquis and two other heavy gamblers then endeavoured to break the bank, but fortune turned and I not only got back my losses but won three hundred louis besides. Thereupon I rose, promising the company to begin again next day. All the ladies had won, as Désarmoises had orders to let them play as they liked up to a certain limit.

I locked up my money and, warning my faithful Spaniard that I should not be coming back, I went to my idol, having got wet through on the way and being obliged to undress as soon as I arrived. The good woman of the house took care to dry my clothes.

I found the fair nun dressed in her religious habit and lying on the small bed.

"Why are you not in your own bed, dearest?"

"Because I feel quite well again, my darling, and I wished to sup with you at table. We will go to bed afterwards if that will give you any pleasure."

"It will give me pleasure if you share in my delight."

• "Alas! I am undone and I shall doubtless die when I have to leave you."

"Do not leave me, sweetheart; come with me to Rome and leave the matter in my hands. I will make you my wife and we will live happily together ever after."

"That would be too great a bliss, but I could never make up my mind to it; say no more about it."

I was sure of spending a delicious night in the possession of all her charms, and we stayed an hour at table, seasoning the dishes with sweet converse. When we had done, the woman came up, gave her a packet and went away again, wishing us good night.

"What does this packet contain, darling?"

"It is the present I have got for you—my portrait, but you must not see it till I am in bed."

"I will indulge you in that fancy, although I am very curious to see the portrait."

"You will say I am right afterwards."

I wanted to undress her myself and she submitted like a lamb. When she was in bed, she opened the packet and showed me her portrait, naked and very like the naked portrait of M— M—. I praised the painter for the excellence of the copy he had made; nothing was altered but the colour of the hair and eyes.

"It isn't a copy," she said. "There would not have been time. He only made the eyes and hair black and the latter more abundant. Thus you have in it a portrait of the first and also of the second M— M— in whom you must forget the first. She has also vanished from the clothed portrait, for you see the nun has black eyes. I could show this picture to anyone as my portrait."

"You do not know how precious your present is to me! Tell me, dearest, how you succeeded in carrying out your plan so well."

"I told the country woman about it yesterday morning, and she said that she had a foster-son at Annecy who was a miniature painter. Through him she sent the two miniatures to a more skilful painter in Geneva, who made the change you see for four or five louis; he was probably able to do it in two or three hours. I entrusted the two por-

traits to him and you see how well he did his work. The woman has no doubt only just received them; to-morrow she may be able to tell you more about it."

"She is really a wonderful woman. I will indemnify her for the expense. But now tell me why you did not want me to see the portrait before you were in bed?"

"Guess."

"Because I can now see you in the same posture as that in which you are represented."

"Exactly."

"It is an excellent idea; only love can have given it you. But you must wait till I am in the same state."

. . .

After considerable talking, of which my ardour began to weary, we abandoned ourselves to love, then to sleep, then to love again and so on alternately till daybreak. As I was leaving, the woman of the house told us that the painter had asked four louis and that she had given two louis to her foster-son. I gave her twelve and went home, where I slept till morn, without thinking of breakfasting with the Marquis de Prié, but I think I should have given him some notice of my inability to come. His mistress sulked with me all dinner-time but softened when I allowed myself to be persuaded into making a bank. However, I found she was playing for heavy stakes and I had to check her once or twice, which made her so cross that she went to hide her ill temper in a corner of the hall. However, the marquis was winning and I was losing when the taciturn Duke of Rosebury, his tutor Smith and two of his fellow countrymen arrived from Geneva. He came up to me and said, "How do you do?" and without another word began to play, inviting his companions to follow his example.

Seeing my bank in the last agony, I sent Le Duc to my room for the cashbox, whence I drew out five rolls of a hundred louis each. The Marquis de Prié said, coolly, that he wouldn't mind being my partner, and in the same tone I begged to be excused. He continued punting without seeming to be offended at my refusal and, when I put down the cards and rose from the table, he had won two hundred louis; but all the others had lost, especially one of the Englishmen, so that I had made a profit of a thousand louis. The marquis asked me if I would offer him chocolate in my room next morning and I replied that I should be glad to see him. I replaced my cashbox in my room and proceeded to the cottage, pleased with the day's work and feeling inclined to crown it with love.

I found my fair friend looking somewhat sad and, on my inquiring the reason, she told me that a nephew of the country woman's, who had come from Chambéry that morning, had told her that he had heard from a lay sister of the same convent whom he knew that two

sisters would start at daybreak in two days' time to fetch her, this sad news, she said, had made her tears flow fast.

"But the abbess said the sisters could not start before ten days had expired."

"She must have changed her mind."

"Sorrow intrudes into our happy state. Will you be my wife? Will you follow me to Rome and receive absolution from your vows? You may be sure that I shall have a care for your happiness."

"Nay, I have lived long enough; let me return to my tomb."

After supper I told the good woman that, if she could rely on her nephew, she would do well to send him at once to Chambéry with orders to return directly the lay sisters started, and to endeavour to reach Aix two hours before them. She told me that I might reckon on the young man's silence and on his carrying out my orders. I quieted in this way the charming nun's alarm and got into bed with her, feeling sad though amorous; and, on the pretext that she required rest, I left her at midnight, as I wanted to be at home in the morning, since I had an engagement with the marquis. In due course he arrived with his mistress, two other ladies and their husbands or lovers.

I did not limit myself to giving chocolate; my breakfast consisted of all the luxuries the place afforded. When I had got rid of my troublesome company, I told Le Duc to shut my door and to tell everybody that I was ill in bed and could not see any visitors. I also warned him that I should be away for two days and that he must not leave my room a moment till I came back. Having made these arrangements, I slipped away unperceived and went to my mistress, resolved not to leave her till half an hour before the arrival of the lay sisters.

When she saw me and heard that I was not going to leave her till she went away, she jumped for joy; and we conceived the idea of not having any dinner, that we might enjoy our supper the better.

"We will go to bed after supper," said she, "and not get up till the messenger brings the fatal news that the lay sisters have started."

I thought the idea an excellent one and called the woman of the house to tell her of our arrangements, and she promised to see that we were not disturbed.

We did not find the time long, for two passionate lovers find plenty to talk about, since their talk is all of themselves. And besides our caresses, renewed again and again, there was something so mysterious and solemn in our situation that our souls and our senses were engaged the whole time.

After a supper which would have pleased a Lucullus, we spent twelve hours in giving each other proofs of our passionate love. The next day we rose to refresh ourselves and after a good dinner, washed down by some excellent burgundy, we went to bed again; but at four the country woman came to tell us that the lay sisters would arrive

about six. We had nothing now to look for in the future, the die was cast and we made our farewell caresses. I then rose and, taking a roll containing fifty louis, I begged her to keep them for me, promising to come for them in two years and take them from her hands through the grating of her terrible prison. She spent the last quarter of an hour in tears and mine were restrained only lest I should add to her grief. I cut off a tuft of her fleece and a lock of her beautiful hair, promising her always to wear them next my heart.

I left her, telling the country woman that she should see me again the next day, and I went to bed as soon as I got home. Next morning I was on the way to Chambéry. At a quarter of a league's distance from Aix, I saw my angel slowly walking along. As soon as the lay-sisters were near enough, they asked an alms in the name of God. I gave them a louis, but my saint did not look at me.

With a broken heart I went to the good country woman, who told me that M— M— had gone at daybreak, bidding her to remind me of the convent grating. I kissed the worthy woman and gave her nephew all the loose silver I had about me, and, returning to the inn, I had my luggage put on to the carriage and would have started that moment if I had had any horses. But I had two hours to wait and I went and bade the marquis farewell. He was out, but his mistress was in the room by herself. On my telling her of my departure, she said, "Don't go; stay with me a couple of days longer."

"I feel the honour you are conferring on me, but business of the greatest importance obliges me to be gone forthwith."

"Impossible," said the lady, as she went to a glass the better to lace herself, showing me a superb breast. I saw her design, but I determined to baulk her. She then put one foot upon a couch to retie her garter, and, when she put up the other foot, I saw beauties more enticing than Eve's apple. It was nearly all up with me when the marquis came in. He proposed a little game of quinze and his mistress asked me to be her partner. I could not escape; she sat next me and I had lost forty louis by dinner-time.

"I owe you twenty," said the lady, as we were going down.

At dessert Le Duc came to tell me that my carriage was at the door and I got up, but, under the pretence of paying me the twenty louis, the marquis's mistress made me come with her to her room.

When we were there, she addressed me in a serious and supplicating voice, telling me that, if I went, she would be dishonoured, as everybody knew that she had engaged to make me stay.

"Do I look worthy of contempt?" said she, making me sit down upon the sofa. "I promise to be yours to-morrow; wait till then."

Not knowing how to refuse, I said I would keep her to her word and would have my horses taken out. Just then the marquis came in, saying he would give me my revenge; and, without answering, I went downstairs as if to come back again, but I ran out of the inn, got

into my carriage and drove off, promising a good fee to the postillion if he would put his horses at a gallop.

CHAPTER 77

THE idea of the sorry plight in which I had left the Marquis de Prié, his mistress and perhaps all the company, who had undoubtedly coveted the contents of my cashbox, amused me till I reached Chambéry, where I stopped only to change horses. When I reached Grenoble, where I intended to stay a week, I did not find the lodging to my liking and went in my carriage to the post-office, where I found several letters, amongst others one from Madame d'Urfé, enclosing a letter of introduction to an officer named Valenglard, who, she told me, was a learned man and would present me at all the best houses in the town.

I called on this officer and received a cordial welcome. After reading Madame d'Urfé's letter, he said he was ready to be useful to me in anything I pleased.

He was an amiable, middle-aged man and fifteen years before had been Madame d'Urfé's friend and, in a much more intimate degree, the friend of her daughter, the Princesse de Toudeville. I told him that I was uncomfortable at the inn and that the first service I would ask of him would be to procure me a comfortable lodging. He rubbed his head and said:

"I think I can get you rooms in a beautiful house, but it is outside the town walls. The doorkeeper is an excellent cook and, for the sake of doing your cooking, I am sure he will lodge you for nothing."

"I don't wish that," said I.

"Don't be afraid," said the baron, "he will make up by means of his dishes; and besides, the house is for sale and costs him nothing. Come and see it."

I took a suite of three rooms and ordered supper for two, warning the man that I was dainty, liked good things and did not care for the cost. I also begged M. de Valenglard to sup with me. The doorkeeper said that, if I was not pleased with his cooking, I had only to say so and in that case I should have nothing to pay. I sent for my carriage and felt that I had established my new abode. On the ground floor I saw three charming girls and the doorkeeper's wife, who all bowed profoundly. M. de Valenglard took me to a concert with the idea of introducing me to everybody, but I begged him not to do so, as I wished to see the ladies before deciding which of them I should like to know.

The company was a numerous one, especially where women were concerned, but the only one to attract my attention was a pretty and modest-looking brunette, whose fine figure was dressed with great simplicity. Her charming eyes, after having thrown one glance in my direction, obstinately refused to look at me again. My vanity made me con-

clude at once that she behaved thus only to increase my desire of knowing her and give me plenty of time to examine her side face and her figure, the proportions of which were not concealed by her simple attire. Success begets assurance and the wish is father to the thought. I cast a hungry gaze on this young lady without more ado, just as if all the women in Europe were only a seraglio kept for my pleasure. I told the baron I should like to know her.

"She is a good girl," said he, "who sees no company and is quite poor."

"Those are three reasons which make me the more anxious to know her."

"You will really find nothing to do in that quarter."

"Very good."

"There is her aunt, I will introduce you to her as we leave the concert room."

After doing me this service, he came to sup with me. The doorkeeper and cook struck me as being very like Lebel. He made his two pretty daughters wait on me and I saw that Valenglard was delighted at having lodged me to my satisfaction, but he grumbled when he saw fifteen dishes.

"He is making a fool of you and me."

"On the contrary, he has guessed my tastes. Don't you think everything was very good?"

"I don't deny it, but . . ."

"Don't be afraid; I love spending my money."

"I beg your pardon, I only want you to be pleased."

We had exquisite wines and at dessert some ratafia superior to the Turkish *visnat* I had tasted seventeen years before at Yussuf Ali's. When my landlord came up at the end of supper, I told him that he ought to be Louis XV's head cook.

"Go on as you have begun and do better if you can, but let me have your bill every morning."

"You are quite right; with such an arrangement one can tell how one is getting on."

"I should like you always to give me ices and you must let me have two more lights. But, unless I am mistaken, those are ordinary candles that I see. I am a Venetian and accustomed to wax lights."

"That is your servant's fault, sir."

"How is that?"

"Because, after eating a good supper, he went to bed, saying he was ill. Thus I heard nothing as to how you liked things done."

"Very good; you shall learn from my own lips."

"He asked my wife to make chocolate for you to-morrow morning; he gave her the chocolate; I will make it myself."

When he had left the room, M. de Valenglard said, in a manner that was at the same time pleased and surprised, that Madame d'Urfé had been apparently joking in telling him to spare me all expense.

"It's her goodness of heart. I am obliged to her all the same. She is an excellent woman."

We stayed at table till eleven o'clock, discussing innumerable pleasant topics and animating our talk with that choice liqueur made at Grenoble, of which we drank a bottle. It is composed of the juice of cherries, brandy, sugar and cinnamon, and cannot be surpassed, I am sure, by the nectar of Olympus.

I sent home the baron in my carriage, after thanking him for his services and begging him to be my companion early and late while I stayed at Grenoble, a request which he granted, excepting those days on which he was on duty. At supper I had given him my bill of exchange on Zappata, which I endorsed with the name de Seingalt, which Madame d'Urfé had given me. He discounted it for me next day. A banker brought me four hundred louis and I had thirteen hundred in my cashbox. I always had a dread of penuriousness and delighted myself at the thought that M. de Valenglard would write and tell Madame d'Urfé, who was always preaching economy to me, what he had seen.

I escorted my guest to the carriage and was agreeably surprised when I got back to find the doorkeeper's two charming daughters.

Le Duc had not waited for me to tell him to find some pretext for not serving me. He knew my tastes and that, when there were pretty girls in a house, the less I saw of him, the better I was pleased.

The frank eagerness of the two girls to wait on me, their utter freedom from suspicion or coquetry made me determine that I would show myself deserving of their trust. They took off my shoes and stockings, did my hair and put on my nightgown with perfect propriety on both sides. When I was in bed, I wished them a good night and told them to shut the door and bring me my chocolate at eight o'clock next morning.

I could not help confessing that I was perfectly happy as I reflected over my present condition. I enjoyed perfect health, I was in the prime of life, I had no calls on me, I was thoroughly independent, I had a rich store of experience, plenty of money, plenty of luck and I was a favourite with women. The pains and troubles I had gone through had been followed by so many days of happiness that I felt disposed to bless my destiny. Full of these agreeable thoughts, I fell asleep and all the night my dreams were of happiness and of the pretty brunette who had played with me at the concert.

I woke with thoughts of her and, feeling sure that we should become acquainted, I felt curious to know what success I should have with her. She was discreet and poor; and, as I was discreet in my own way, she ought not to despise my friendship.

At eight o'clock, one of the doorkeeper's daughters brought me my chocolate and told me that Le Duc had got the fever.

"You must take care of the poor fellow."

"My cousin has just taken him some broth."

"My name is Rose and my sister's is Manon."

Just then Manon came in with my shirt, on which she had put fresh lace. I thanked her and she said with a blush that she did her father's hair very well.

"I am delighted to hear it and I shall be very pleased if you will be kind enough to do the same offices for me till my servant recovers."

"With pleasure, sir."

"And I," said Rose, laughing, "will shave you."

"I should like to see how you do it; get the water."

I rose hastily, while Manon was preparing to do my hair. Rose returned and shaved me admirably. As soon as she had washed off the lather, I said, "You must give me a kiss," presenting my cheek to her. She pretended not to understand.

"I shall be vexed," said I, gravely but pleasantly, "if you refuse to kiss me."

She begged to be excused, saying with a little smile that it was not customary to do so in Grenoble.

"Well, if you won't kiss me, you shan't shave me."

The father came in at that point, bringing his bill.

"Your daughter has just shaved me admirably," said I, "and she refuses to kiss me, because it is not the custom in Grenoble."

"You little silly," said he, "it is the custom in Paris. You kiss me fast enough after you have shaved me; why should you be less polite to this gentleman?"

She then kissed me with an air of submission to the paternal decree which made Manon laugh.

"Ah!" said the father, "your turn will come when you have finished doing the gentleman's hair."

He was a cunning fellow, who knew the best way to prevent me beating him down, but there was no need, since I thought his charges reasonable, and, as I paid him full, he went off in great glee.

Manon did my hair as well as my dear Dubois and kissed me when she had done, without making as many difficulties as Rose. I thought I should get on well with both of them. They went downstairs when the banker was announced.

He was quite a young man and, after he had counted me out four hundred louis, he observed that I must be very comfortable in that house.

"Certainly," said I, "the two sisters are delightful."

"Their cousin is better. They are too discreet."

"I suppose they are well off."

"The father has two thousand francs a year. They will be able to marry well-to-do tradesmen."

I was curious to see the cousin, who was said to be prettier than the sisters, and, as soon as the banker had gone, I went downstairs to satisfy my curiosity. I met the father and asked him which was Le

Duc's room and thereon I went to see my fine fellow. I found him sitting up in a comfortable bed, with a rubicund face which did not look as if he were dangerously ill.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir. I am having a fine time of it. Yesterday I suddenly took a notion to be ill."

"What made you think of that?"

"The sight of the three Graces here, who are made of better stuff than your handsome housekeeper, who would not let me kiss her. They are making me wait too long for my broth, however. I shall have to speak severely about it."

• "Le Duc, you are a rascal."

"Do you want me to get well?"

"I want you to put a stop to this farce, as I don't like it."

Just then the door opened and the cousin came in with the broth. I thought her ravishing and I noticed that, in waiting on Le Duc, she had an imperious little air which well became her.

"I shall dine in bed," said my Spaniard.

"You shall be attended to," said the pretty girl, and she went out.

"She puts on big airs," said Le Duc, "but that does not impress me. Don't you think she is very pretty?"

"I think you are very impudent. You ape your betters and I don't approve of it. Get up. You must wait on me at table and afterwards you will eat your dinner by yourself and try to get yourself respected as an honest man always is, whatever his condition, so long as he does not forget himself. You must not stay any longer in this room; the doorkeeper will give you another."

I went out and, on meeting the fair cousin, I told her that I was jealous of the honour which she had done my man and begged her to wait on him no longer.

"Oh, I am very glad!"

The doorkeeper came up and I gave him my orders and went back to my room to write.

Before dinner the baron came and told me that he had just come from the lady to whom he had introduced me. She was the wife of a barrister named Morin and aunt to the young lady who had so interested me.

"I have been talking of you," said the baron, "and of the impression her niece made on you. She promised to send for her and keep her at the house all day."

After a dinner as good as the supper of the night before, though differing from it in its details and appetising enough to awaken the dead, we went to see Madame Morin, who received us with the easy grace of a Parisian lady. She introduced me to seven children, of whom she was the mother. Her eldest daughter, an ordinary-looking girl, was twelve years old, but I should have taken her to be fourteen and said so. To convince me of her age, the mother brought a book in which the year,

the month, the day, the hour and even the minute of her birth were entered. I was astonished at such minute accuracy and asked if she had had a horoscope cast.

"No," said she, "I have never found anybody to do it."

"It is never too late," I replied, "and without doubt God has willed that this pleasure should be reserved for me."

At this moment M. Morin came in, his wife introduced me and, after the customary compliments had passed, she returned to the subject of the horoscope. The barrister sensibly observed that, if judicial astrology was not wholly false, it was, nevertheless, a suspected science, that he had been so foolish as once to devote a considerable portion of his time to it, but that, on recognising the inability of man to deal with the future, he had abandoned astrology, contenting himself with the verifiable truths of astronomy. I saw with pleasure that I had to deal with a man of sense and education, but Valenglard, who was a believer in astrology, began an argument with him on the subject. During their discussion I quietly copied out on my tablets the date of Mlle. Morin's birth. But M. Morin saw what I was about and shook his head at me with a smile. I understood what he meant, but did not allow that to disconcert me, as I had made up my mind fully five minutes before that I would play the astrologer on this occasion.

At last the fair niece arrived. Her aunt introduced me to her as Mlle. Roman Coupier, her sister's daughter, and then, turning to her, she informed her how ardently I had been longing to know her since I had seen her at the concert.

She was then seventeen. Her satin skin by its dazzling whiteness displayed to greater advantage her magnificent black hair. Her features were perfectly regular and her complexion had a slight tinge of red; her fine eyes were at once sweet and sparkling, her eyebrows were well arched, her mouth small, her teeth regular and as white as pearls, and her lips, of an exquisite rosy hue, afforded a seat to the deities of grace and modesty.

After some moments' conversation, M. Morin was obliged to go out on business and a game of quadrille was proposed, at which I was greatly pitied for having lost a louis. I thought Mlle. Roman discreet, judicious, pleasant without being brilliant and, still better, without any pretensions. She was high-spirited, even-tempered and had a natural art which did not allow her to seem to understand too flattering a compliment or a joke which passed in any way the bounds of propriety. She was neatly dressed, but had no ornaments and nothing which showed wealth; neither earrings, rings nor watch. One might have said that her beauty was her only adornment, the only ornament she wore being a small gold cross hanging from her necklace of black ribbon. Her breast was well shaped and not too large. Fashion and custom made her show half of it as innocently as she showed her plump white hand or her cheeks, whereon the lily and the rose were wedded. I

looked at her features to see if I might hope at all, but I was completely puzzled and could come to no conclusion. She gave no sign which made me hope, but on the other hand she did nothing to make me despair. She was so natural and so reserved that my sagacity was completely at fault. Nevertheless, a liberty which I took at supper gave me a gleam of hope. Her napkin fell down and, in returning it to her, I pressed her thigh amorously and could not detect the slightest displeasure on her features. Content with so much, I begged everybody to come to dinner with me next day, telling Madame Morin that I should not be going out and was therefore delighted to put my carriage at her service.

• When I had taken Valenglard home, I went to my lodging, building castles in Spain as to the conquest of Mlle. Roman.

I warned my landlord that we should be six at dinner and supper the following day and then I went to bed. As Le Duc was undressing me, he said, "Sir, you are punishing me, but what makes me sorry is that you are punishing yourself by depriving yourself of the services of those pretty girls."

"You are a rogue."

"I know it, but I serve you with all my heart and I love your pleasure as well as my own."

"You plead well for yourself, I am afraid I have spoilt you."

"Shall I do your hair to-morrow?"

"No, you may go out every day till dinner-time."

"I shall be certain to catch *la mignonne*."

"Then I shall send you to the hospital."

"That is a fine prospect, *por Dios*."

He was impudent, sly, profligate and a rascally fellow, but also obedient, devoted, discreet and faithful and his good qualities made me overlook his defects.

Next morning, when Rose brought my chocolate, she told me with a laugh that my man had sent for a carriage and, after dressing himself in the height of fashion, had gone off with his sword at his side, to pay calls, as he said.

"We laughed at him."

"You were quite right, my dear Rose."

As I spoke, Manon came in under some pretext or other. I saw that the two sisters had an understanding never to be alone with me; I was displeased, but pretended not to notice anything. I got up and had scarcely put on my dressing-gown when the cousin came in with a packet under her arm.

"I am delighted to see you and above all to note your smiling face, for I thought you much too serious yesterday."

"That's because M. le Duc is a greater gentleman than you are; I should not have presumed to laugh in his presence. But I had my reward in seeing him start off this morning in his gilded coach."

"Did he see you laughing at him?"

"Yes, unless he is blind."

"He will be vexed."

"All the better!"

"You are really very charming. What have you got in that parcel?"

"Some goods of our own manufacture. Look; they are embroidered gloves."

"They are beautiful; the embroidery is exquisitely done. How much for the lot?"

"Are you a good hand at a bargain?"

"Certainly."

"Then we must take that into account."

After some whisperings together the cousin took a pen, put down the number of gloves, added up and said, "'The lot will cost you two hundred and ten francs."

"There are nine louis; give me six francs change."

"But you told us you would make a bargain?"

"You were wrong to believe it."

She blushed and gave me the six francs. Rose and Manon shaved me and did my hair, giving me a kiss with the best grace imaginable; and, when I offered my cheek to the cousin, she kissed me on the mouth in a manner that told me she would be wholly mine at the first opportunity.

"Shall we have the pleasure of waiting on you at table?" said Rose.

"I wish you would."

"But we should like to know who is coming to dinner first; as, if it is officers from the garrison, we dare not come, they make so free."

"My guests are Madame Morin, her husband and her niece."

"Very good."

The cousin said, "Mlle. Roman is the prettiest and the best girl in Grenoble, but she will find some difficulty in marrying, as she has no money."

"She may meet some rich man who will think her goodness and her beauty worth a million of money."

"There are not many men of that kind."

"No, but there are a few."

Manon and the cousin went out and I was left alone with Rose, who stayed to dress me. I attacked her, but she defended herself so resolutely that I desisted and promised it should not occur again. When she had finished, I gave her a louis, thanked her and sent her away.

As soon as I was alone, I locked the door and proceeded to concoct the horoscope I had promised to Madame Morin. I found it an easy task to fill eight pages with learned folly; I confined myself chiefly to declaring the events which had already happened to the *native*. I had deftly extracted some items of information in the course of conversation and, filling up the rest according to the laws of probability and dressing up the whole in astrological diction, I happened to hit it right, and thereafter no doubts were cast on my skill. I did not indeed run much risk, for everything was buttressed with an "if," and in the judicious employment of "ifs" has always lain the secret of all astrologers, whether fools or frauds.

I carefully re-read the document and thought it admirable. I felt in the vein and the use of the cabala had made me an expert in this sort of thing.

Just after noon all my guests arrived and at once we sat down to table. I have never seen a more sumptuous or more delicate repast. I saw that the cook was an artist more in need of restraint than encouragement. Madame Morin was very polite to the three girls, whom she knew well, and Le Duc stood behind her chair all the time, looking after her wants and dressed as richly as the king's chamberlain. When we had nearly finished dinner, Mlle. Roman passed a compliment on my three fair waiting-maids and, this giving me occasion to speak of their talents, I got up and brought the gloves I had purchased from them. Mlle. Roman praised the quality of the material and the work. I took the opportunity and begged leave of the aunt to give her and her niece a dozen pair apiece. I obtained this favour and then gave Madame Morin the horoscope. Her husband read it and, though an unbeliever, he was forced to admire, as all the deductions were taken naturally from the position of the heavenly bodies at the instant of his daughter's birth. We spent a couple of hours in talking about astrology and as much time in playing quadrille, and then we took a walk in the garden, where I was politely left to enjoy the society of the fair Mlle. Roman.

Our dialogue, or rather my monologue, turned solely on the profound impression she had made on me, the passion she had inspired, her beauty, her goodness, the purity of my intentions and my need of love, lest I should go down to the grave the most hapless of men.

"Sir," said she, at last, "if my destiny points to marriage, I do not deny that I should be happy to find a husband like you."

I was emboldened by this frank declaration and, seizing her hand, I covered it with fiery kisses, saying passionately that I hoped she would not let me languish long. She turned her head to look for her aunt. It was getting dark and she seemed to be afraid of something happening to her. She drew me gently with her and, on rejoining the other guests, we returned to the dining-room, where I made a small bank at faro for their amusement. Madame Morin gave some money to her daughter and niece, whose pockets were empty, and Valenglard directed their play so well that, when we left off to go to supper, I had the pleasure of seeing that each of the three ladies had won two or three louis.

We sat at table till midnight. A cold wind from the Alps stopped my plan of proposing a short turn in the garden. Madame Morin overwhelmed me with thanks for my entertainment and I gave each of my lady visitors a respectful kiss.

I heard singing in the kitchen and, on going in, found Le Duc in a high state of excitement and very drunk. As soon as he saw me, he tried to rise, but he lost his centre of gravity and fell right under the kitchen table. He was carried away to bed.

I thought this accident favourable to my desire of amusing myself and I might have succeeded if the three Graces had not all been there.

Love laughs only when two are present, and that is why ancient mythology tells no story of the loves of the Graces, who were always together. I had not yet found an opportunity of getting my three maids one after the other and I dared not risk a general attack, which might have lost me the confidence of each one. Rose, I saw, was openly jealous of her cousin, as she kept a keen lookout over her movements. I was not sorry, for jealousy leads to anger and anger goes a long way. When I was in bed, I sent them away with a modest "good night."

Next morning Rose came in by herself to ask me for a cake of chocolate, for, as she said, Le Duc was now ill in real earnest. She brought me the box and I gave her the chocolate and, in doing so, took her hand and showed her how well I loved her. She was offended, drew back her hand sharply and left the room. A moment after Manon came in under the pretext of showing me a piece of lace I had torn away in my attempts of the day before and of asking me if she should mend it. I took her hand to kiss it, but she did not give me time, presenting her lips, burning with desire. I took her hand again when the cousin came in. Manon held the piece of lace and seemed to be waiting for my answer. I told her absently that I should be obliged if she would mend it when she had time, and with this she went out.

I was troubled by this succession of disasters and thought that the cousin would not play me false, to judge by the earnest of her affection which she had given me the day before in that ardent kiss of hers. I begged her to give me my handkerchief and seized her hand and gently drew her toward me. Her mouth fastened to mine and her hand, which she left to my pleasure with all the gentleness of a lamb, was already in motion when Rose came in with my chocolate. We regained our composure in a moment, but I was furious at heart. I scowled at Rose and I had a right to do so after the manner in which she had repulsed me a quarter of an hour before. Though the chocolate was excellent, I pronounced it badly made. I chid her for her awkwardness in waiting on me and repulsed her at every step. When I got up, I would not let her shave me; I shaved myself, which seemed to humiliate her, and then Manon did my hair. Rose and the cousin then went out, as if to make common cause together, but it was easy to see that Rose was less angry with her sister than with her cousin.

As Manon was finishing my toilette, M. de Valenglard came in. As soon as we were alone, the officer, who was a man of honour and of much sense (in spite of his belief in astrology and the occult sciences) said that he thought me looking rather melancholy and that, if my sadness had any connection with the fair Mlle. Roman, he warned me to think no more of her unless I had resolved to ask her hand in marriage. I replied that, to put an end to all difficulties, I had decided on leaving Grenoble in a few days. We dined together and then called on Madame Morin, with whom we found her fair niece.

Madame Morin gave me a flattering welcome and Mlle. Roman received me so graciously that I was emboldened to kiss her and place her on my knee. The aunt laughed, the niece blushed and then, slipping

into my hand a little piece of paper, made her escape. I read on the paper the year, day, hour and minute of her birth and guessed what she meant. She meant, I thought, that I could do nothing with her before I had cast her horoscope. My resolve was soon taken to profit by this circumstance and I told her that I would tell her whether I could oblige her or not the next day if she would come to a ball I was giving. She looked at her aunt and my invitation was accepted.

Just then the servant announced "the Russian Gentleman." I saw a well built man of about my own age, slightly marked with smallpox and dressed as a traveller. He accosted Madame Morin with easy grace, was welcomed heartily by her, spoke well, scarcely gave me a glance and did not say a word to the nieces. In the evening M. Morin came in and the Russian gave him a small phial full of a white liquid and then made as if he would go, but he was kept to supper.

At table the conversation ran on this marvellous liquid of his. M. Morin told me that he had cured a young man of a bruise from a billiard ball in five minutes by merely rubbing with the liquid. He said modestly that it was a trifling thing of his own invention and he talked a good deal about chemistry to Valenglard. As my attention was taken up by the fair Mlle. Roman, I could not take part in their conversation; my hope of succeeding with her on the following day absorbed all my thoughts. As I was going away with Valenglard, he told me that nobody knew who the Russian was, but that nevertheless he was received everywhere.

"Has he a carriage and servants?"

"He has nothing, no servants and no money."

"Where did he come from?"

"From the skies."

"A fair abode, certainly. How long has he been here?"

"For the last fortnight. He visits but asks for nothing."

"How does he live?"

"On credit at the inn; he is supposed to be awaiting his carriage and servants."

"He is probably a vagabond."

"He does not look like one, as you saw for yourself, and his diamonds contradict that hypothesis."

"Yes, if they are not imitation stones, for it seems to me that, if they were real, he would sell them."

When I got home, Rose came by herself to attend on me, but she continued to sulk. I tried to rouse her up, but, as I had no success, I ordered her to go and tell her father that I was going to give a ball next day in the room by the garden and that supper was to be laid for twenty.

When the doorkeeper came to take my orders the following morning, I told him that I should like his girls to dance if he didn't mind. At this Rose condescended to smile and I thought it a good omen. Just as she went out with her father, Manon came in under the pretext of asking me what lace I would wear for the day. I found her as gentle

...remembered I had left out the portrait of the fair nun. I ran to her and begged her to give me the indecent picture I had so foolishly left about.

"I don't mind the indecency of it," said she, "but what strikes me is the exact likeness."

I understood everything and shuddered at the carelessness of which I had been guilty.

"Madame," I said, "that is the portrait of a Venetian lady of whom I was very fond."

"I dare say, but it's very curious. These two M's, these religious robes sacrificed to love, everything makes my surprise greater."

"She is a nun and is named M— M—."

"And a 'Welsh niece' of mine at Chambéry is also named M— M— and belongs to the same order. Nay, more, she has been at Aix (whence you have come) to get cured of an illness."

"And this portrait is like her?"

"As one drop of water is like another."

"It's very strange! I wish I had seen her."

"If you go to Chambéry, call on her and say you come from me; you will be welcome and you will be as much surprised as I am."

"I will do so after I have been in Italy. However, I will not show her this portrait, which would scandalise her; I will put it away carefully."

"I beg you not to show it to anyone."

"You may rely on me."

I was in an ecstasy at having put her off so effectually.

At eight o'clock all my guests arrived and I saw before me all the fairest ladies and noblest gentlemen of Grenoble. The only thing which vexed me was the compliments they lavished on me, as is customary in the provinces.

I opened the ball with the lady pointed out to me by M. Valenglard and then I danced with all the ladies in succession; but my partner in all the square dances was the fair Mlle. Roman, who shone by her simplicity—at least, in my eyes.

After a quadrille in which I had exerted myself a good deal, I felt hot and went up to my room to put on a lighter suit and, as I was doing so, in came the fair cousin, who asked if I required anything.

"Yes, you, dearest," I replied, going up to her and taking her in my arms. "Did anyone see you coming in here?"

"No, I came from upstairs and my cousins are in the dancing-room."

"That is capital. You are fair as Love himself and this is an excellent opportunity for showing you how much I love you."

"Good heavens! What are you doing? Let me go; somebody might come in. Well, put out the light."

I put it out, shut the door and, my head full of Mlle. Roman, the cousin found me as ardent as I should have been with that delightful person. I confess, too, that the doorkeeper's niece was well worthy

so she kissed me and left the room.

I went back to the ballroom and we danced on till the king of door-keepers came to tell us supper was ready.

A collation composed of the luxuries which the season and the country afforded covered the table, but what pleased the ladies most was the number and artistic arrangement of the wax lights.

I sat down at a small table with a few of my guests and received the most pressing invitations to spend the autumn in their town. I am sure that, if I had accepted, I should have been treated like a prince, for the nobility of Grenoble bear the highest reputation for hospitality. I told them that, if it had been possible, I should have had the greatest pleasure in accepting their invitation and in that case I should have been delighted to make the acquaintance of the family of an illustrious gentleman, a friend of my father's.

"What name is it?" they asked me, all together.

"Bouchenu de Valbonnais."

"He was my uncle. Ah! sir, you must come and stay with us. You danced with my daughter. What was your father's name?"

This story, which I had invented and uttered, as I was wont, on the spur of the moment, turned me into a sort of wonder in the eyes of the worthy people.

After we had laughed, jested, drunk and eaten, we rose from the table and began to dance anew.

Seeing Madame Morin, her niece and Valenglard going into the garden, I followed them and, as we walked in the moonlight, I led the fair Mlle. Roman through a covered alley; but all my fine speeches were in vain, I could do nothing. I held her in my arms and covered her with burning kisses, but not one did she return to me and her hands offered a successful resistance to my hardy attempts. By a sudden effort, however, I at last held her in such a way that further resistance would have been of no avail, but she stopped me short by saying in a voice which no man of feeling could have resisted, "Be my friend, sir, and not my enemy and the cause of my ruin."

I knelt before her and, taking her hand, begged her pardon, swearing not to renew my attempts. I then rose and asked her to kiss me, as a pledge of her forgiveness. We rejoined her aunt and returned to the ballroom but, with all my endeavours, I could not regain my calm.

I sat down in a corner of the room and asked Rose, who passed by me, to get me a glass of lemonade. When she brought it, she gently chid me for not having danced with her, her sister or her cousin.

"It will give people but a poor opinion of our merits."

"I am tired," said I, "but, if you will promise to be kind, I will dance a minuet with you."

"What do you want me to do?" said she.

see your sister and your cousin busy dancing."

"And you will dance only with me?"

"I swear "

"Then you will find me in your room."

To keep my word with her, I waited for the closing minuet, for, had I danced with Rose earlier, I would have felt obliged in common decency to dance with the other two, especially as I owed them the same debt.

At daybreak the ladies began to vanish and, as I put the Morins into my carriage, I told them I could not have the pleasure of seeing them again that day, but that, if they would come and spend the whole of the day after with me, I would have the horoscope ready.

I went to the kitchen to thank the worthy doorkeeper for having made me cut such a gallant figure and I found the three nymphs there, filling their pockets with sweetmeats. He told them, laughing, that, as the master was there, they might rob him with a clear conscience and I bade them take as much as they would. I informed the doorkeeper that I should not dine till six, and I then went to bed

I awoke at noon and, feeling well rested, I set to work at the horoscope and I resolved to tell the fair Mlle. Roman that fortune awaited her in Paris, where she would become her master's mistress, but that the monarch must see her before she had attained her eighteenth year, as at that time her destiny would take a different turn. To give my prophecy authority, I told her some curious circumstances which had previously happened to her and which I had learnt now and again from herself or Madame Morin without pretending to heed what they said.

With an Ephemeris and another astrological book I made out and copied in six hours Mlle. Roman's horoscope and I arranged it so well that it struck Valenglard and even M. Morin with astonishment and made the two ladies quite enthusiastic.

I hoped I should be asked to take the precious jewel to Paris myself and I felt inclined to grant the request. I flattered myself that they would not be able to do without me and that I should get what I wanted, if not for love, at any rate through gratitude; indeed, who knew what might come of the plan? The monarch would be sure to be smitten immediately. I had no doubts on that subject, for where is the man in love who does not think that his beloved object will win the hearts of all others? For the moment I felt quite jealous of the King but, from my thorough knowledge of my own inconstancy, I felt sure that my jealousy would cease when my love had been rewarded, and I was aware that Louis XV did not altogether hold the opinions of a Turk in such concerns. What gave an almost divine character to the horoscope was the prediction of a son to be born, who would make the happiness of France and could come only from the royal blood and from a singular vessel of election, which would produce nothing

A curious fancy increased my delight, namely, the thought of becoming a famous astrologer in an age when reason and science had so justly demolished astrology. I enjoyed the thought of seeing myself sought out by crowned heads, which are always the most accessible to superstitious notions. I determined I would be particular to whom I gave my advice. Who has not built his castle in Spain? If Mlle. Roman gave birth to a daughter instead of a son, I should be amused and all would not be lost, for a son might come afterwards.

My horoscope must be known only to the young lady and her family, who would no doubt keep the secret well. After I had put the finishing touches to it and read it again, I felt certain that I had made a masterpiece and I then dined in bed with my three nymphs. I was polite and affectionate to them all and we were all happy together, but I was the happiest. M. de Valenglard came to see me early the next day and informed me that nobody suspected me of being in love with Mlle. Roman, but that I was thought to be amorous of my landlord's girls.

"Well, let them think so," said I. "They are worthy of love, though not to be named in the same breath with one who is past compare but leaves me no hope."

"Let me tell Madame d'Urfé all about it."

"Certainly; I shall be delighted."

Monsieur and Madame Morin and their niece came at noon and we spent the hour before dinner in reading the horoscope. It would be impossible to describe the four distinct sorts of surprise which I saw before me. The interesting Mlle. Roman looked very grave and, not knowing whether she had a will of her own, listened to what was said in silence. M. Morin looked at me now and again and, seeing that I kept a serious countenance, did not dare to laugh. Valenglard showed fanatic belief in astrology in every feature. Madame Morin seemed struck as by a miracle and, far from thinking the fact prophesied too improbable, remarked that her niece was much more worthy of becoming her sovereign's wife or mistress than the bigoted Maintenon had been.

"She would never have done anything," said Madame Morin, "if she had not left America and come to France; and, if my niece does not go to Paris nobody can say that the horoscope has prophesied falsely. We should therefore go to Paris, but how is it to be done? I don't see my way to it. The prediction of the birth of a son has something divine and entrancing about it. I don't wish to seem prejudiced, but my niece has certainly more qualifications for gaining the King's affection than la Maintenon had; my niece is a good girl and young, while la Maintenon was no longer as young as she had been and had led a strange life before she became a devotee. But we shall never accomplish this journey to Paris."

"Nay," said Valenglard, in a serious tone, which struck me as supremely ridiculous, "she must go; her fate must be fulfilled."

The fair Mlle. Roman seemed all amazed. I let them talk on and we sat down to dinner.

At first silence reigned and then the conversation ran on a thousand trifles, as is usual in good society, but by degrees, as I had thought, they returned to the horoscope.

"According to the horoscope," said the aunt, "the King is to fall in love with my niece in her eighteenth year; she is now close on it. What are we to do? Where are we to get the hundred louis necessary? And, when she gets to Paris, is she to go to the King and say, 'Here I am, Your Majesty'? And who is going to take her there? I can't."

"My aunt Roman might," said the young lady, blushing up to her eyes at the roar of laughter which none of us could restrain.

"Well," said Madame Morin, "there is Madame Varnier, of the Rue de Richelieu, she is an aunt of yours. She has a good establishment and knows everybody."

"See," said Valenglard, "how the ways of destiny are made plain. You talk of a hundred louis; twelve will be sufficient to take you to Madame Varnier's. When you get there, leave the rest to your fate, which will surely favour you."

"If you do go to Paris," said I, "say nothing to Madame Roman or Madame Varnier about the horoscope."

"I will say nothing to anyone about it; but, after all, it is only a happy dream. I shall never see Paris, still less Louis XV."

I arose and, going to my cashbox I took out a roll of a hundred and fifty louis, which I gave to her, saying it was a packet of sweetmeats. It felt rather heavy and, on opening it, she found it to contain fifty pieces-of-eight, which she took for medals.

"They are gold," said Valenglard.

"And the goldsmith will give you a hundred and fifty louis for them," added M. Morin.

"I beg you will keep them; you can give me a bill payable in Paris when you become rich."

I knew she would refuse to accept my present, although I should have been delighted if she had kept the money. But I admired her strength of mind in restraining her tears, and that, too, without disturbing for a moment the smile on her face.

We went out to take a turn in the garden. Valenglard and Madame Morin began on the topic of the horoscope anew and I left them, taking Mlle. Roman with me.

"I wish you would tell me," said she, when we were out of hearing of the others, "if this horoscope is not all a joke."

"No," I answered, "it is quite serious, but it all depends on an 'if'—if you do not go to Paris, the prophecy will never be fulfilled."

"You must think so, certainly, or you would never have offered me those fifty medals."

"Do me the pleasure of accepting them now; nobody will know anything about it."

"No, I cannot, though I am much obliged to you. But why should you want to give me such a large sum?"

"For the pleasure of contributing to your happiness and in the hope that you will allow me to love you."

"If you really love me, why should I oppose your love? You need not buy my consent, and, to be happy, I do not need to possess the King of France, if you did but know to what my desires are limited."

"Tell me."

"I would fain find a kind husband, rich enough for us not to lack the necessities of life."

"But what if you did not love him?"

"If he was a good, kind man, how could I help loving him?"

"I see that you do not know what love is."

"You are right. I do not know the love that maddens, and I thank God for that."

"Well, I think you are wise; may God preserve you from that love."

"You say that as soon as the King sees me, he will fall in love with me; to tell you the truth, that strikes me as vastly improbable, for, though it is quite possible that he may not think me plain or he might even pronounce me pretty, yet I do not think he will become so madly in love as you say."

"You don't? Let us sit down. You have only to fancy that the King will take the same liking to you that I have done; that is all."

"But what do you find in me that you will not find in most girls of my age? I certainly may have struck you, but that only proves that I was born to exercise this sway over you, and not at all that I am to rule the King in like manner. Why should I go and look for the King if you love me yourself?"

"Because I cannot give you the position you deserve."

"I should have thought you had plenty of money."

"Then there's another reason; you are not in love with me."

"I love you as tenderly as if I were your wife. I might then kiss you, though duty now forbids my doing so."

"I am much obliged to you for not being angry with me for being so happy with you!"

"On the contrary, I am delighted to please you."

"Then you will allow me to call on you at an early hour to-morrow and take coffee at your bedside."

"Do not dream of such a thing. If I would, I could not. I sleep with my aunt and I always rise at the same time she does. Get away! Stop that, please! You promised not to do that again. In God's name, let me alone."

Alas! I had to stop; there was no overcoming her. But what pleased me extremely was that, in spite of my amorous persecution, she did not lose that smiling calm which so became her. As for myself, I looked as if I deserved that pardon for which I pleaded on my knees, and in her eyes I read that she was sorry she could not grant what I desired of her.

I could no longer stay beside her; my senses were too excited by her beauty. I left her and went to my room, where I found the kind Manon busying herself with my cuffs; she treated me more kindly, but after a short time, she too made her escape. I reflected that I should never obtain more than I had obtained hitherto from young Mlle. Roman—at least, unless I gave the lie to my horoscope by marrying her, and I decided that I would not take any further steps in the matter.

I returned to the garden and, going up to the aunt, I begged her to walk with me. In vain I urged the worthy woman to accept from me a hundred louis for her niece's journey. I swore to her by all I held sacred that no one else should ever know of the circumstance. All my eloquence and all my prayers were in vain. She told me that, if her niece's destiny depended only on that journey, all would be well, for she had thought over a plan which would, with her husband's consent, enable Mlle. Roman to go to Paris. At the same time she gave me her sincerest thanks and said that her niece was very fortunate to have pleased me so well.

"She pleased me so well," I replied, "that I have resolved to go away to-morrow to avoid making proposals to you which would bring the great fortune that awaits her to naught. If it were not for that, I should have been happy to ask her hand of you."

"Alas! perhaps her happiness would then have been built on a better foundation. Explain yourself."

"I dare not wage war with Fate."

"But you are not going to-morrow?"

"Excuse me, madame I shall call to take leave at two o'clock."

The news of my approaching departure saddened the supper table. Madame Morin, who, for all I know, may be alive now, was a most kind-hearted woman. At table she announced her resolve that, as I had decided on going and as I should leave my house only to take leave of her, she would not force me to put myself out to such an extent and she ordained that our farewells should be said that evening.

"At least," I said, "I may have the honour of escorting you to your door?"

"That will protract our happiness for some minutes."

Valenglard went away on foot and the fair Mlle. Roman sat on my lap. I dared to be bold with her, and contrary to expectation, she showed herself so kind that I was half sorry I was going; but the die was cast.

A carriage lying overturned on the road outside an inn made my coachman stop a short while and this accident, which made the poor driver curse, overwhelmed me with joy, for in these few moments I overwhelmed her with all the caresses possible under the circumstances.

Happiness enjoyed alone is never complete. Mine was not until I assured myself, by looking at my sweetheart's features, that she had taken as complete delight as myself in our pleasure; and I

escorted the ladies to their room. There, without any conceit, I was certain that I saw sadness and love upon that fair creature's face. I could see that she was neither cold nor insensible and that the obstacles she had put in my way were suggested only by fear and virtue. I gave Madame Morin a farewell kiss and she was kind enough to tell her niece to give me a similar mark of friendship, which she did in a way that showed me how completely she had shared my ardour.

I left them, feeling amorous and sorry I had obliged myself to go. On entering my room, I found the three nymphs together, which vexed me, as I wanted only one. I whispered my wishes to Rose as she curled my hair, but she told me it was impossible for her to slip away, as they all slept in one room. I then told them that I was going away the next day and that, if they would pass the night with me, I would give them a present of six louis each. They laughed at my proposal and said it couldn't possibly be done. I saw by this that they had not made confidantes of one another, as girls mostly do, and I also saw that they were jealous of each other. I wished them a good night and, as soon as I was in bed, the god of dreams took me under his care for the night.

I rang rather late in the morning and the cousin came in and said that Rose would bring my chocolate and that M. Charles Ivanoff wanted to speak to me. I guessed that this was the Russian, but, as he had not been introduced to me, I thought I might decline to see him.

"Tell him I don't know his name."

Rose went out and came in again, saying he was the gentleman who had had the honour of supping with me at Madame Morin's.

"Tell him to come in."

"Sir," said he, "I want to speak with you in private."

"I cannot order these young ladies to leave my room, sir. Be kind enough to wait for me outside till I have put on my dressing-gown, and then I shall be ready to speak to you."

"If I am troubling you, I will call again to-morrow."

"You would not find me, as I am leaving Grenoble to-day."

"In that case I will wait."

I got up in haste and went out to him.

"Sir," said he, "I must leave this place and I have not a penny to pay my landlord. I beg of you to come to my aid. I dare not have recourse to anyone else in the town, for fear of exposing myself to the insult of a refusal."

"Perhaps I ought to feel myself flattered at the preference you have shown me but, without wishing to insult you in any way, I am afraid I shall be obliged to refuse your request."

"If you knew who I am, I feel sure you would not refuse me some small help."

"If you think so, tell me who you are; you may count on my silence."

"I am Charles, second son of Ivan, Duke of Courland, who is in exile in Siberia. I made my escape."

"If you go to Genoa, you will find yourself beyond the reach of

poverty, for no doubt the brother of your lady mother would never abandon you."

"He died in Silesia."

"When?"

"Two years ago, I believe."

"You have been deceived, for I saw him in Stuttgart scarcely six months ago. He is the Baron de Treiden."

It did not cost me much to get wind of the adventurer, but I felt angry that he had had the impudence to try to dupe me. If it had not been for that, I would willingly have given him six louis, for it would have been bad form on my part to declare war against adventurers, as I was one myself, and I ought to have pardoned his lies, as nearly all adventurers are more or less impostors.

I gave a glance at his diamond buckles, which were considered real at Grenoble, and saw directly that they were counterfeits of a kind made in Venice, which imitates the facets of the diamonds to perfection, except for people who are experienced in diamonds.

"You have diamond buckles," said I. "Why don't you sell them?"

"It's the last piece of jewellery I possess out of all my mother gave me, and I promised her never to part with them."

"I would not show those buckles if I were you; your pocket would be a better place for them. I may tell you frankly that I believe the stones to be counterfeit and that your lie displeases me."

"Sir, I am not a liar."

"We shall see. Prove that the stones are genuine and I will give you six louis. I shall be delighted if I am in the wrong. Goodbye."

Seeing M. de Valenglard coming up to my door, he begged me not to tell him of what had passed between us, and I promised that I would tell no one.

Valenglard came to wish me a prosperous journey; he himself was obliged to go with M. Monteinard. He begged me to correspond constantly with him; and I had been intending to make the same request, as I took too great an interest in the fair Mlle. Roman not to wish to hear of her fate and the correspondence the worthy officer desired was the best way possible for me to hear about her. As will be imagined, I promised what he asked without making any difficulty. He shed tears as he embraced me and I promised to be his friend.

CHAPTER 78

WHILE the three girls were helping Le Duc pack my mails, my landlord entered, gave me his bill and, finding everything correct, I paid him, much to his satisfaction. I owed him a compliment, too, at which he seemed extremely gratified.

"Sir," said I, "I do not wish to leave your house without having the pleasure of dining with your charming girls, to show them how I appreciate the care they have taken of me. Let me have, then, a delicate

repast for four and also order post-horses, that I may start in the evening."

"Sir," broke in Le Duc, "I entreat you to order a saddle-horse besides; I was not made for a seat behind a chaise."

The cousin laughed openly at his vain boasting and, to avenge himself, the rascal told her that he was better than she.

"Nevertheless, M. le Duc, you will have to wait on her at table."

"Yes, as she waits on you in bed."

I ran for my stick, but the rogue, knowing what was going to happen, opened the window and jumped into the courtyard. The girls gave a shriek of terror, but, when we looked out, we saw him jumping about and performing a thousand apish tricks.

Very glad to find that he had not broken a limb, I called out, "Come back; I forgive you." The girls and the man himself who had escaped so readily were as delighted as I. Le Duc came in in high spirits, observing that he had not known he was such a good jumper.

"Very good; but don't be so impudent another time. Here, take this watch."

So saying, I gave him a valuable gold watch, which he received, saying, "I would jump again for another watch like this."

Such was my Spaniard, whom I had to dismiss two years afterwards. I have often missed him.

The hours went by with such speed when I was seated at table with the three girls, whom I vainly endeavoured to intoxicate, that I decided that I would not leave till the next day. I was tired of making mysteries and wanted to enjoy them all together and resolved that the orgy should take place that night. I told them that, if they would pass the night in my room, I would not go till the next day. This proposition was received with a storm of exclamations and laughter, as an impossibility, while I endeavoured to excite them to grant my request. In the midst of this, the doorkeeper came in, advising me not to travel by night, but to go to Avignon by a boat in which I could ship my carriage.

"You will save time and money," said he.

"I will do so," I answered, "if these girls of yours will keep me company all night, as I am determined I will not go to bed."

"O Lord!" said he with a laugh, "that's their business."

This decided them and they gave in. The doorkeeper sent to order the boat and promised to let me have a dainty supper by midnight.

The hours passed by in jests and merriment and, when we sat down to supper, I made the champagne corks fly to such an extent that the girls began to get rather gay. I myself felt a little heated and, as I held each one's little secret, I had the hardihood to tell them that their scruples were ridiculous, as each of them had shown no reserve with me in private.

At this they gazed at one another in a kind of blank surprise, as if indignant at what I had said. Foreseeing that feminine pride might prompt them to treat my accusation as an idle calumny, I resolved not



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to give them time, and drawing Manon on to my lap, I embraced her with such ardour that she abandoned all efforts to resist me. Her example overcame the others and for five hours we indulged in every kind of voluptuous enjoyment. At the end of that time we were all in need of rest, but I had to go. I wanted to give them some jewels, but they said they would rather I ordered gloves to the amount of thirty louis, the money to be paid in advance and the gloves not to be called for.

I went to sleep on board the boat and did not wake till we got to Avignon. I was conducted to the inn of St. Omer and supped in my room, in spite of the marvellous tales which Le Duc told me of a young beauty at the public table.

Next morning my Spaniard told me that the beauty and her husband slept in a room next to mine. At the same time he brought me a bill of the play and I saw "Company from Paris," with Mlle. Astrodi, who was to sing and dance. I gave a cry of wonder and exclaimed, "The famous Astrodi at Avignon; how she will be astonished to see me!"

Not wanting to live in hermit fashion, I went downstairs to dine at the public table and found a score of people sitting down to such a choice repast that I could not conceive how it could be done for forty sous a head. The fair stranger drew all eyes, and especially mine, towards her. She was a young and perfect beauty, silent, her eyes fixed on a napkin, replying in monosyllables to those who addressed her and glancing at the speaker with large blue eyes, the beauty of which it would be difficult to describe. Her husband was seated at the other end of the table, a man of a kind that inspires contempt at the first glance. He was young, marked with the smallpox, a greedy eater, a loud talker, laughing and speaking at random, and altogether I took him for a servant in disguise. Feeling sure that such a fellow did not know how to refuse, I sent him a glass of champagne, which he drank off to my health forthwith. "May I have the pleasure of sending a glass to your wife?" He replied, with a roar of laughter, to ask her myself; and, with a slight bow, she told me that she never took anything to drink. When the dessert came in, she rose and her husband followed her to their room.

A stranger, who like myself had never seen her before, asked me who she was. I said I was a newcomer and did not know and somebody else said that her husband called himself the Chevalier Stuard, that he came from Lyons and was going to Marseilles; he had come, it appeared, to Avignon a week before, without servants and in a very poor carriage. I had intended staying at Avignon only as long as might be necessary to see the Fountain (or Fall) of Vaucluse and had not provided myself with letters of introduction, so that there was no chance to make acquaintances in order to have an excuse to stay there and admire the charms of this fair dame. But an Italian who had read and enjoyed the divine Petrarch would naturally wish to see the place made famous by the poet's love for Laura.

I went to the theatre, where I saw the vice-legat Salviati, women

of fashion, neither fair nor foul, and a wretched comic opera; but I saw neither Astrodi nor any other actor from the *Comédie Italienne* in Paris.

"Where is the famous Astrodi?" said I, to a man sitting by me. "I have not seen her yet."

"Excuse me, she has danced and sung before your eyes."

"By Jove, it's impossible! I know her perfectly and, if she has so changed as not to be recognised, she is no longer herself."

I turned to go and two minutes after the young man I had addressed came up and begged me to come back and he would take me to Astrodi's dressing-room, as she had recognised me. I followed him without saying a word, and saw a plain-looking girl, who threw her arms round my neck and addressed me by my name, though I could have sworn I had never seen her before, but she did not leave me time to speak. Close by I saw a man who represented himself to be the father of the famous Astrodi, who was known to all Paris and had caused the death of the Count d'Egmont, one of the most amiable noblemen of the court of Louis XV. I thought this ugly female might be Astrodi's sister, so I sat down and complimented her on her talents. She asked if I would mind her changing her dress, and in a moment she was running here and there, laughing and showing a liberality which possibly might have been absent if what she had to display had been worth seeing.

I laughed internally at her wiles, for, after my experiences at Grenoble, she would have found it a hard task to arouse my desires if she had been as pretty as she was ugly. Her thinness and her tawny skin could not divert my attention from other still less pleasing features about her. I admired her confidence in spite of her disadvantages. She must have credited me with a diabolic appetite, but these women often contrive to extract charms out of their depravity which their delicacy would be impotent to furnish. She begged me to sup with her and, as she persisted, I was obliged to refuse her in a way I should not have allowed myself to use with any other woman. She then begged me to take four tickets for the play the next day, which was to be for her benefit. I saw it was only a matter of twelve francs and, delighted to be quit of her so cheaply, I told her to give me sixteen. I thought she would have gone mad with joy when I gave her a double louis. She was not the real Astrodi. I went back to my inn and had a delicious supper in my own room.

While Le Duc was doing my hair before I went to bed, he told me that the landlord had paid a visit to the fair stranger and her husband before supper and had said in clear terms that he must be paid next morning, and, if he were not, no place would be laid for them at table and their linen would be detained.

"Who told you that?"

"I heard it from here; their room is separated from this only by a wooden partition. If they were in it now, I am sure they could hear all we are saying."

"Where are they, then?"

"At table, where they are eating for to-morrow, but the lady is crying. There's a fine chance for you, sir."

"Be quiet; I shan't have anything to do with it. It's a trap, for a woman of any worth would die rather than weep at a public table."

"Ah, if you saw how pretty she looks in tears! I am only a poor devil, but I would willingly give her two louis if she would earn them."

"Go and offer her the money."

A moment after the gentleman and his wife came back to their room and I heard the loud voice of the one and the sobs of the other, but, as he was speaking Walloon, I did not understand what he said.

"Go to bed," said I to Le Duc, "and next morning tell the landlord to get me another room, for a wooden partition is too thin a barrier to keep off people whom despair drives to extremities."

I went to bed myself and the sobs and muttering did not die away till midnight. I was shaving next morning when Le Duc announced the Chevalier Stuard.

"Say I don't know anybody of that name."

He executed my orders and returned, saying that the chevalier, on hearing my refusal to see him, had stamped with rage, gone into his chamber and come out again with his sword beside him.

"I am just the same going to see," added Le Duc, "that your pistols are well primed."

I felt inclined to laugh, but none the less I admired the foresight of my Spaniard, for a man in despair is capable of anything.

"Go," said I, "and ask the landlord to give me another room."

In due course the landlord came himself and told me that he could not oblige me until the next day.

"If you don't get me another room, I shall leave your house on the spot, because I don't like hearing sobs and reproaches all night."

"Can you hear them, sir?"

"You can hear them yourself now. What do you think of it? The woman will kill herself and you will be the cause of her death."

"I, sir? I have only asked them to pay me my just dues."

"Hush! there goes the husband. I am sure he is telling his wife in his language that you are an unfeeling monster."

"He may tell her what he likes, so long as he pays me."

"You have condemned them to die of hunger. How much do they owe you?"

"Fifty francs."

"Aren't you ashamed of making such a row for a wretched sum like that?"

"Sir, I am ashamed only of an ill deed and I do not commit such a deed in asking for my own."

"There's your money. Go and tell them that you have been paid and that they may eat again, but don't say who gave you the money."

"That's what I call a good action," said the fellow; and he went

and told them that they did not owe him anything, but that they would never know who had paid the money.

"You may dine and sup," he added, "at the public table, but you must pay me day by day."

After he had delivered this speech in a high voice, so that I could hear as well as if I had been in the room, he came back to me.

"You stupid fool!" said I, pushing him away, "they will know everything." So saying, I shut my door.

Le Duc stood in front of me, staring stupidly before him.

"What's the matter with you, idiot?" said I.

"That's fine. I see. I am going on the stage. You would do well to become an actor."

"You are a fool."

"Not so big a fool as you think."

"I am going for a walk, mind you don't leave my room for a moment."

I had scarcely shut the door when the chevalier accosted me and overwhelmed me with thanks.

"Sir, I don't know to what you are referring."

He thanked me again, and left me and, walking by the banks of the Rhône, which geographers say is the most rapid river in Europe, I amused myself by looking at the ancient bridge. At dinner-time I went back to the inn and, as the landlord knew that I paid six francs a meal, he treated me to an exquisite repast. Here, I remember, I had some exceedingly choice Hermitage. It was so delicious that I drank nothing else. I wished to make a pilgrimage to Vaucluse and begged the landlord to procure me a good guide, and after I had dressed, I went to the theatre.

I found the Astrodi at the door and, giving her my sixteen tickets, I sat down near the box of the vice-legat Salviati, who came in a little later, surrounded by a numerous train of ladies and gentlemen bedizened with orders and gold lace.

The so-called father of the false Astrodi came and whispered that his daughter begged me to say that she was the celebrated Astrodi I had known in Paris. I replied, also in a whisper, that I would not run the risk of being posted as a liar by bolstering up an imposture. The ease with which a rogue invites a gentleman to share in a knavery is astonishing; he must think his confidence confers an honour.

At the end of the first act a score of lackeys in the prince's livery took round ices to the front boxes. I thought it my duty to refuse. A young gentleman, as fair as Love, came up to me and with easy politeness asked why I had refused an ice.

"Not having the honour to know anyone here, I did not care that anyone should be able to say that he had regaled one who was unknown to him."

"But you, sir, are a man who needs no introduction."

"You do me too much honour."

"You are staying at the St. Omer?"

"Yes; I am stopping here only to see Vaucluse, where I think of going to-morrow if I can get a good guide."

"If you would do me the honour of accepting me, I should be delighted. My name is Dolci, I am a son of the captain of the vice-legate's guard."

"I feel the honour you do me and accept your obliging offer. I will put off my start till your arrival."

"I will be with you at seven."

I was astonished at the easy grace of this young Adonis, who might have been a pretty girl if the tone of his voice had not announced his manhood. I laughed at the false Astrodi, whose acting was as poor as her face and who kept staring at me all the time. While she sang, she regarded me with a smile and gave me signs of an understanding which must have made the audience notice me and doubtless pity my bad taste. The voice and eyes of one actress pleased me; she was young and tall, but hunchbacked to an extraordinary degree. She was tall in spite of her enormous hump and, if it had not been for this malformation, she would have been six feet tall. Besides her pleasing eyes and very tolerable voice, I fancied that, like all hunchbacks, she was intelligent. I found her at the door with the ugly Astrodi when I was leaving the theatre. The latter was waiting to thank me and the other was selling tickets for her benefit.

After the Astrodi had thanked me, the hunchbacked girl turned towards me and, with a smile that stretched from ear to ear and displayed at least twenty-four exquisite teeth, said that she hoped I would honour her by being present at her benefit.

"If I don't leave before it comes off, I will," I replied.

At this the impudent Astrodi laughed and, in the hearing of several ladies waiting for their carriages, told me that her friend might be sure of my presence, as she would not let me go before the benefit night. "Give him sixteen tickets," she added. I was ashamed to refuse and so I gave her two louis. Then, in a lower voice, the Astrodi said, "After the show we will come and sup with you, but on condition that you ask nobody else, as we want to be alone."

In spite of a feeling of anger, I thought that such a supper party would be amusing and, as no one in the town knew me, I resolved to stay, in the hope of enjoying a hearty laugh.

I was having my supper alone when Stuard and his wife entered their room. That evening I heard no sobs or reproaches, but early next morning I was surprised to see the chevalier, who said, as if we had been old friends, that he had heard I was going to Vaucluse and, as I had taken a carriage with four places, he would be much obliged if I would allow him and his wife, who wanted to see the fountain, to go with me. I consented.

Le Duc begged to be allowed to accompany me on horseback, saying that he had been a true prophet. In fact, it seemed as if the couple had agreed to repay me for my expenditure by giving me new hopes. I was

not displeased with the expedition and it was all to my advantage, as I had had recourse to no stratagems to obtain it.

Dolci came, looking as handsome as an angel; my neighbours were ready and the carriage was loaded with the best provisions of food and drink obtainable, we set off, Dolci seated beside the lady and I beside the chevalier.

I had thought that the lady's sadness would give place, if not to gaiety, at least to a quiet cheerfulness, but I was mistaken, for, to all my remarks, grave or gay, she replied either in monosyllables or in a severely laconic style. Poor Dolci, who was full of wit, was stupefied. He thought himself the cause of her melancholy and was angry with himself for having innocently cast a shadow on the pleasure party. I relieved him of his fears by telling him that, when he offered me his pleasant society, I was not aware that I was to be of service to the fair lady. I added that, when at daybreak I received this information, I was pleased that he would have such good company. The lady did not say a word. She kept silent and gloomy all the time and gazed to right and left like one who does not see what is before his eyes.

Dolci felt at ease after my explanation and did his best to arouse the lady, but without success. He talked on a variety of topics to the husband, always giving her an opportunity of joining in, but her lips remained motionless. She looked like the statue of Pandora before it had been quickened by the divine flame.

The beauty of her face was perfect, her eyes were of a brilliant blue, her complexion a delicate mixture of white and red; her arms were as rounded as a Grace's, her hands plump and well shaped; her figure was that of a nymph, giving delightful hints of a magnificent breast; her hair was a chestnut brown, her foot small; she had all that constitutes a beautiful woman save that gift of intellect which makes beauty more beautiful and gives a charm to ugliness itself. My vagrant fancy showed me her naked form; all seemed ravishing, and yet I thought that, though she might inspire a passing fancy, she could not arouse a durable affection. She might minister to a man's pleasures; she could not make him happy.

I arrived at the isle resolved to trouble myself about her no more; she might, I thought, be mad or in despair at finding herself in the power of a man whom she could not possibly love. I could not help pitying her and yet I could not forgive her for consenting to be of a party which she knew she must spoil by her morose behaviour.

As for the self-styled Chevalier Stuard, I did not trouble my head whether he were her husband or her lover. He was young, commonplace-looking and spoke affectedly; his manners were not good and his conversation betrayed both ignorance and stupidity. He was a beggar, devoid of money and wits, and I could not make out why he took with him a beauty who, unless she were over-kind, could add nothing to his means of subsistence. Perhaps he expected to live at the expense of simpletons and had come to the conclusion, in spite of his

ignorance, that the world is full of such; however, experience must have taught him that this plan cannot be relied on.

When we got to Vaucluse, I let Dolci lead, he had been there a hundred times and his merit was enhanced in my eyes by the fact that he was a lover of Laura's poetic lover. We left the carriage at Apt and wended our way to the fountain, which was honoured that day with a numerous throng of pilgrims. The stream pours forth from a vast cavern, the handiwork of nature, inimitable by man. It is situated at the foot of a rock with a sheer descent of more than a hundred feet. The cavern is hardly half as high and the water pours forth from it in such abundance that it deserves the name of river at its source. It is the Sorgue which falls into the Rhône near Avignon. There is no other stream as pure and clear, for the rocks over which it flows harbour no deposits of any kind. Those who dislike it on account of its apparent blackness should remember that the extreme darkness of the cavern gives it that gloomy tinge.

*Chiare, fresche e dolci acque,
Ove le belle membra
Pose colei che sola a me par donna.*

I wished to ascend to the rocky point where Petrarch's house used to stand. I gazed on the remains with tears in my eyes, like Leo Allatius at Homer's grave. Sixteen years later I wept at Arqua, where Petrarch died and his house still remains. The likeness between the two situations was astonishing, for from Petrarch's study at Arqua a rock can be seen similar to that which may be viewed at Vaucluse, where was the residence of Madonna Laura.

"Let us go there," said I, "it is not far off."

I will not endeavour to delineate my feelings as I contemplated the ruins of the house where dwelt the lady whom the amorous Petrarch immortalised in his verse—verse made to move a heart of stone:

Morte bella pareo nel suo bel viso.

I threw myself with arms outstretched upon the ground as if I would embrace the very stones. I kissed them, I watered them with my tears, I strove to breathe the holy breath they had once contained. I begged Madame Stuard's pardon for having left her to do homage to the spirit of a woman who had quickened the profoundest soul that ever lived.

I say "soul" advisedly, for the body and the senses, whatever may be said, had no part whatsoever therein.

"Four hundred years have passed and gone, madame," said I to the cold statue, who gazed at me in astonishment, "since Laura de Sade walked here; perhaps she was not as handsome as you, but she was lively, kindly, polite and good of heart. May this air which she breathed and which you breathe now kindle in you the spark of divine fire, that fire that coursed through her veins and made her heart beat and her bosom swell! Then you would win the worship of all worthy men and

from none would you receive the least offence. Gladness, madame, is the lot of the happy, and sadness the portion of souls condemned to everlasting pains. Be cheerful, then, and you will do something to deserve your beauty."

The worthy Dolci was kindled by my enthusiasm. He threw himself upon me and kissed me again and again, the fool Stuard laughed, and his wife, who possibly thought me mad, did not evince the slightest emotion. She took my arm and we walked slowly towards the house of Messer Francesco d'Arezzo, where I spent a quarter of an hour in cutting my name. After that we had our dinner.

Dolci lavished more attention on the extraordinary woman than I did. Stuard did nothing but eat and drink and despised the Sorgue water, which, said he, would spoil the Hermitage; possibly Petrarch may have been of the same opinion. We drank deeply without impairing our reason, but the lady was very temperate. When we reached Avignon, we bade her farewell, declining the invitation of her foolish husband to come and rest in his rooms.

I took Dolci's arm and we walked beside the Rhône as the sun went down. Among other keen and witty observations, the young man said:

"That woman is an old hand, infatuated with a sense of her own merit. I would bet that she left her own country only because her charms, from being too freely displayed, ceased to please there. She must be confident of making her fortune out of anybody she comes across. I suspect that the fellow who passes for her husband is a rascal and that her pretended melancholy is put on to drive a persistent lover to distraction. She has not yet succeeded in finding a dupe, but, as she will no doubt try to catch a rich man, it is not improbable she is hovering over you."

When a young man of Dolci's age reasons like that, he is bound to become a great master. I kissed him as I bade him good night, thanked him for his kindness and we agreed that we would see more of one another.

As I came back to my inn, I was accosted by a fine-looking man of middle age, who greeted me by name and asked with great politeness if I had found Vaucluse as fine as I had expected. I was delighted to recognise the Marquis of Grimaldi, a Genoese, a clever and good-natured man, with plenty of money, who always lived in Venice because he was more at liberty to enjoy himself there than in his native country, which shows that there is no lack of freedom at Venice.

After I had answered his question, I followed him into his room, where, having exhausted the subject of the fountain, he asked me what I thought of my fair companion.

"I did not find her satisfactory in all respects," I answered; and, noticing the reserve with which I spoke, he tried to remove it by the following confession:

"There are some very pretty women in Genoa, but not one to compare with her whom you took to Vaucluse to-day. I sat opposite to her at table yesterday evening and was struck with her beauty. I offered

her my arm up the stair; I told her I was sorry to see her so sad and, if I could do anything for her, she had only to speak. You know I was aware she had no money. Her husband, real or pretended, thanked me for my offer and, after I had wished them a good night, I left them.

"An hour ago you left her and her husband at the door of their apartment and soon afterwards I took the liberty of calling. She welcomed me with a pretty bow and her husband went out directly, begging me to keep her company till his return. The fair one made no objection to sitting next to me on a couch and this struck me as a good omen, but, when I took her hand, she gently drew it away. I then told her, in as few words as I could, that her beauty had made me fall in love with her and that, if she wanted a hundred louis, they were at her service if she would drop her melancholy and behave in a manner suitable to the feelings with which she had inspired me. She replied only by a motion of the head which showed gratitude but also an absolute refusal of my offer. 'I am going to-morrow,' said I. No answer. I took her hand again and she drew it back with an air of disdain which wounded me. I begged her to excuse me and left the room without more ado.

"That's an account of what happened an hour ago. I am not amorous of her, it was only a whim; but knowing, as I do, that she has no money, her manner astonished me. I fancied that you might have placed her in a position to despise my offer and this would, in a measure, explain her conduct; otherwise I can't understand it at all. May I ask you to tell me whether you are more fortunate than I?"

I was enchanted with the frankness of this noble gentleman and did not hesitate to tell him all and we laughed together at our bad fortune; I had to promise to call on him in Genoa and tell him whatever happened between us during the two days I purposed to remain at Avignon. He asked me to sup with him and admire the fair recalcitrant.

"She has had an excellent dinner," said I, "and in all probability she will not have any supper."

"I bet she will," said the marquis, and he was right, which made me see clearly that the woman was playing a part. A certain Comte de Bussi, who had just come, was placed next to her at table. He was a good-looking young man, with a fatuous sense of his own superiority, and he afforded us an amusing scene.

He was good-natured, a wit and inclined to broad jokes and his manner towards women bordered on the impudent. He had to leave at midnight and began to make love to his fair neighbour forthwith and teased her in a thousand ways; but she remained as dumb as a statue, while he did all the talking and laughing, not regarding it within the bounds of possibility that she might be laughing at him.

I looked at M. Grimaldi, who found it as difficult to keep his countenance as I did. The young *roué* was hurt at her silence and continued pestering her, giving her all the best pieces on his plate after tasting them first. The lady refused to take them and he tried to put them into her mouth, while she repulsed him in a rage. He saw that no one

seemed inclined to take her part and determined to continue the assault and, taking her hand, he kissed it again and again. She tried to draw it away and, as she rose, he put his arm round her waist and made her sit down on his lap; but at this point the husband took her arm and led her out of the room. The attacking party looked rather taken aback for a moment as he followed her with his eyes, but sat down again and began to eat and laugh afresh, while everybody else kept a profound silence. He then turned to the footman behind his chair and asked him if his sword was upstairs. The footman said "no" and then the fatuous young man turned to an abbé who sat near me and inquired who had taken away his mistress.

"It was her husband," said the abbé

"Her husband! Oh, that's another thing; husbands don't fight—a man of honour always apologises to them."

With that he got up, went upstairs and came down again directly, saying:

"The husband's a fool. He shut the door in my face and told me to satisfy my desires somewhere else. It isn't worth the trouble of stopping, but I wish I had made an end of it."

He then called for champagne, offered it vainly to everybody, bade the company a polite farewell and went upon his way.

As M. Grimaldi escorted me to my room, he asked me what I had thought of the scene we had just witnessed. I told him I would not have stirred a finger, even if he had turned up her clothes.

"No more would I," said he, "but, if she had accepted my hundred louis, it would have been different. I am curious to know the further history of this siren and I rely on you to tell me all about it as you go through Genoa."

He went away at daybreak next morning.

When I got up, I received a note from the false Astrodi, asking me if I expected her and her great chum to supper. I had scarcely replied in the affirmative when the sham Duke of Courland I had left at Grenoble appeared on the scene. He confessed in a humble voice that he was the son of a clockmaker at Narva, that his buckles were valueless and that he had come to beg an alms of me. I gave him four louis and he asked me to keep his secret. I replied that, if anyone asked me about him, I should say what was absolutely true, that I knew nothing about him.

"Thank you; I am now going to Marseilles."

"I hope you will have a prosperous journey."

Later on my readers will hear how I found him in Genoa. It is a good thing to know something about people of this kind, of whom there are far too many in the world.

I called up the landlord and told him I wanted a delicate supper for three in my own room.

He told me that I should have it and then said, "I have just had a row with the Chevalier Stuard."

"What about?"

"Because he has nothing to pay me with and I am going to turn them out immediately, although the lady is in bed in convulsions which are suffocating her."

"Take out your bill in her charms."

"Ah, I don't care for that sort of thing! I am getting on in life and I don't want any more scenes to bring discredit on my house."

"Go and tell her that from henceforth she and her husband will dine and sup in their own room and that I will pay for them as long as I remain here."

"You are very generous, sir, but you know that meals in a private room are charged double."

• "I know they are."

"Very good."

I shuddered at the idea of the woman being turned out of doors without any resources but her body, by which she refused to profit. On the other hand, I could not condemn the innkeeper, who, like his fellows, was not troubled with much gallantry. I had yielded to an impulse of pity without any hopes of advantages for myself. Such were my thoughts when Stuard came to thank me, begging me to come and see his wife and try to persuade her to behave in a different manner.

"She will give me no answers and you know that that sort of thing is rather tedious."

"Come, she knows what you have done for her; she will talk to you, for her feelings..."

"What business have you to talk about feelings after what happened yesterday evening?"

"It was well for that gentleman that he went away at midnight, otherwise I should have killed him this morning."

"My dear sir, allow me to tell you that all that is pure braggadocio. Yesterday, not to-day, was the time to kill him, or to throw your plate at his head, at all events. We will now go and see your wife."

I found her in bed, her face to the wall, the coverlet right up to her chin and her body convulsed with sobs. I tried to bring her to reason, but as usual got no reply. Stuard wanted to leave me, but I told him that, if he went out, I would go, too, as I could do nothing to console her, as he might know after her refusing the Marquis of Grimaldi's hundred louis for a smile and her hand to kiss.

"A hundred louis!" cried the fellow, with a sturdy oath, "what folly! We might have been at home in Liége by now. A princess allows one to kiss her hand for nothing, and she... A hundred louis! Oh, damnable!"

His exclamations, very natural under the circumstances, made me feel inclined to laugh. The poor devil swore by all his gods, and I was about to leave the room when all at once the wretched woman was seized with true or false convulsions. With one hand she seized a water bottle and sent it flying into the middle of the room and with the other she tore the clothes away from her breast. Stuard tried to hold her, but her disorder increased in violence and the coverlet was disarranged to such a degree that I could see the most exquisite naked charms im-

aginable. At last she grew calm and her eyes closed as if she were exhausted; she remained in the most voluptuous of all positions that could have been invented. I began to get very excited. How was I to look on such beauties without desiring to possess them? At this point her wretched husband left the room, saying he was gone to fetch some water. I saw the snare and my self-respect prevented my being caught in it. I had an idea that the whole scene had been arranged with the intent that I should deliver myself up to brutal pleasure, while the proud and foolish woman would be free to disavow all participation in the act. I constrained myself and gently veiled what I would fain have revealed in all its naked beauty. I condemned to darkness those charms which this monster of a woman wished me to enjoy only that I might be debased.

Stuard was gone a rather long time. When he came back with the water bottle full, he was no doubt surprised to find me perfectly calm and in no disorder of any kind and a few minutes afterwards I went out to cool myself by the banks of the Rhône.

I walked along rapidly, feeling enraged with myself, for I felt that the woman had bewitched me. In vain I tried to bring myself to reason, the more I walked, the more excited I became, and I determined that, after what I had seen, the only cure for my disordered fancy was enjoyment, brutal or not. I saw that I should have to win her, not by an appeal to sentiment, but by hard cash, without caring what sacrifices I made. I regretted my conduct, which then struck me in the light of false delicacy, for, if I had satisfied my desires and she had chosen to turn prude, I might have laughed her to scorn and my position would have been unassailable. At last I determined on telling the husband that I would give him twenty-five louis if he could obtain me an interview in which I could satisfy my desires.

Full of this idea, I went back to the inn and had my dinner in my own room without troubling to inquire after her. Le Duc told me she was dining in her room, too, and that the landlord had told the company she would not take her meals in public any more. This was information I possessed already.

After dinner I called on the good-natured Dolci, who introduced me to his father, an excellent man, but not rich enough to satisfy his son's desire of travelling. The young man was possessed of considerable dexterity and performed a number of very clever conjuring tricks. He had an amiable nature and, seeing that I was curious to know about his love affairs, he told me numerous little stories which showed me he was at that happy age when one's inexperience is one's sole misfortune.

There was a rich lady for whom he did not care, as she wanted him to give her that which he would be ashamed to give save for love, and there was a girl who required him to treat her with respect. I thought I could give him a piece of good advice, so I told him to grant his favours to the rich woman and to fail in respect now and again to the girl, who would be sure to scold and then forgive. He was no profligate

and seemed rather inclined to become a Protestant. He amused himself innocently with his friends of his own age in a garden near Avignon and a sister of the gardener's wife was kind to him when they were alone.

In the evening I went back to the inn and had not long to wait for the Astrodi and the Lepi (so the hunchbacked girl was named); but, when I saw these two caricatures of women, I felt stupefied. I had expected them, of course, but the reality confounded me. The Astrodi tried to counterbalance her ugliness by an outrageous freedom of manners; while the Lepi, who, though a hunchback, was very talented and an excellent actress, was sure of exciting desire by the rare beauty of her eyes and teeth, which latter seemed almost to leap out of her enormous mouth in order to challenge admiration for their regularity and whiteness. The Astrodi rushed up to me and gave me an Italian embrace, to which, willy nilly, I was obliged to submit. The Lepi, less forward, offered me her cheek, which I pretended to kiss. I saw that the Astrodi woman was in a fair way to become intolerable, so I begged her to moderate her transports, because, as a novice at these parties, I wanted to get accustomed to them by degrees. She promised that she would be good.

While we were waiting for supper, I asked her, for the sake of something to say, whether she had found a lover at Avignon.

"Only the vice-legate's auditor," she replied, "and, though he makes me his pathic, he is good-natured and generous. I accustomed myself to his taste easily enough, though I should have thought such a thing impossible a year ago, as I fancied the exercise a painful one, but I was wrong."

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"I wonder at your telling everyone what sort of a connection you have with the auditor," said I.

"Nonsense! I don't tell everyone, but everyone tells me and congratulates me, too. They know the worthy man has never cared for women and it would be absurd to deny what everybody guesses. I used to be astonished at my sister, but the best plan in this world is to be astonished at nothing."

My spirits began to rise as I thought of the pleasure I should get after supper.

"Have you never had a lover?" said I to the Lepi.

"No," said the Astrodi, "she is still a maid."

"No, I am not," replied the Lepi, in some embarrassment. "I had a lover in Bordeaux, and another in Montpellier."

"Yes, I know, but you are still as you were born,"

"I can't deny it."

"What's that? Two lovers and still a maid! I don't understand; please tell me about it, for I have never heard of such a thing."

"Before I satisfied my first lover, which happened when I was only twelve, I was just the same as I am now."

"It's wonderful. And what did he say when he saw it?"

"I swore that he was my first and he believed me, putting it down to the peculiar shape of my body."

"He was an intelligent man."

Supper came and I had the pleasure of seeing the two nymphs eat like starving savages and drink still better. When the Hermitage had done its work, the Astrodi proposed that we should cast off the clothes which disfigure nature.

"Certainly," said I, "and I will turn away while you are getting ready."

I went behind the curtains, took off my clothes and went to bed with my back to them. At last, the Astrodi told me that they were ready and, when I looked, the Lepi took up all my attention. In spite of her double deformity, she was a handsome woman. My glances frightened her, for she was doubtless taking part in an orgy for the first time. I gave her courage, however, by praising those charms which the white and beautiful hands could not hide.

I ask my reader's leave to draw a veil over some incidents of this truly scandalous orgy, in which the ugly woman taught me some things I did not know before. At last, more tired than exhausted, I told them to begone, but the Astrodi insisted on finishing up with a bowl of punch. I agreed, but, not wishing to have anything more to do with either of them, I dressed again. However, the champagne punch excited them to such an extent that at last they urged me to share in their play. But I felt disgusted with myself and drew away from their lascivious frenzies and gave them ten louis to get rid of them. The Astrodi fell on her knees, blessed me, thanked me, called me her god, and the Lepi wept and laughed for joy at the same time; and thus for a quarter of an hour I was treated to a scene of an extraordinary kind.

I had them taken home in my carriage and slept till ten o'clock next morning. Just as I was going out for a walk, Stuard came to my room and told me, with an air of despair, that, if I did not give him the means of going away before I left, he would throw himself into the Rhône.

"That's rather tragic," said I, "but I can find a cure. I will disburse twenty-five louis, but it is your wife who must receive them; and the

only condition is that she must receive me alone for an hour and be entirely kind." ol

"Sir, we need just that sum, my wife is disposed to receive you go and talk to her. I shall not be in till noon." 7

I put twenty-five louis in a pretty little purse and left my room, thinking that the victory was won. I entered her room and approached her bed respectfully. When she heard me, she sat up in bed without taking the trouble to cover her breast and, before I could wish her good day she spoke to me as follows:

"I am ready, sir, to pay with my body for the wretched twenty-five louis of which my husband is in need. You can do what you like with me, but remember that, in taking advantage of my position to assuage your brutal lust, you are the viler of the two, for I sell myself so cheaply only because necessity compels me to do so. Your baseness is more shameful than mine. Come on, here I am."

With this flattering address, she threw off the coverlet with a vigorous gesture. For a moment I stood silent with indignation. All my passion had evaporated, in those voluptuous rounded limbs I saw now only the covering of a wild beast's soul. I put back the coverlet with the greatest calmness and addressed her in a tone of cold contempt.

"No, madame, I shall not leave this room humiliated by what you have just told me, but I shall leave it after imparting to you a few humiliating truths of which you cannot be ignorant if you are a woman of any decency whatever. Here are twenty-five louis, a wretched sum to give a virtuous woman in payment of her favours, but much more than you deserve. I am not brutal and, to convince you of the fact, I am going to leave you in the undisturbed possession of your charms, which I despise as heartily as I should have admired them if your behaviour had been different. I give you the money only from a feeling of compassion which I cannot overcome and which is the only feeling I now have for you. Nevertheless, let me tell you that, whether a woman sells herself for twenty-five louis or twenty-five million, she is as much a prostitute in the one case as in the other if she does not give her love with herself, or at all events the semblance of love. Farewell."

I went back to my room and in course of time Stuard came to thank me.

"Sir," said I, "leave me alone; I wish to hear no more about your wife."

They left the next day for Lyons, and my readers will hear of them again in Liège.

In the afternoon Dolci took me to his garden, that I might see the gardener's sister. She was pretty, but not so pretty as he. He soon got her into a good humour after some trifling objections. This Adonis had been richly dowered by nature, and I told him that he had no need of emptying his father's purse to travel, and before long he took my advice. This fair Ganymede might easily have turned me into Jove, as he struggled amorously with the gardener's sister.

As I was going home, I saw a young man coming out of a boat; he

was from twenty to twenty-five years old and looked very sad. Seeing me looking at him, he accosted me and humbly asked for alms, showing me a document authorising him to beg and a passport stating that he had left Madrid six weeks before. He came from Parma and was named Costa. When I saw Parma, my national prejudice spoke in his favour and I asked him what misfortune had reduced him to beggary.

"Only lack of money to return to my native country," said he.

"What were you doing in Madrid and why did you leave?"

"I was there four years as valet to Dr. Pistoria, physician to the King of Spain, but on my health failing I left him. Here is a certificate which will show you that I gave satisfaction."

"What can you do?"

"I write a good hand, I can assist a gentleman as his secretary and I intend being a scribe when I get home. Here are some verses I copied yesterday."

"You write well, but can you write correctly without a book?"

"I can write from dictation in French, Latin and Spanish."

"Correctly?"

"Yes, sir, if the dictation is done properly, for it is the business of the one who dictates to see that everything is correct."

I saw that Master Gaetan Costa was an ignoramus, but in spite of that I took him to my room and told Le Duc to address him in Spanish. He answered well enough, but, on my dictating to him in Italian and French, I found he had not the remotest idea of orthography. "But you can't spell," said I to him. However, I saw he was mortified at this and I consoled him by saying that I would take him to his own country at my expense. He kissed my hand and assured me that I should find a faithful servant in him.

This young fellow took my fancy by his odd way of reasoning; he had probably first assumed it to distinguish himself from the block-heads amongst whom he had hitherto lived, and now used it in perfect good faith with everybody. He thought that the art of a scribe consisted solely in possessing a good hand and that the fairest writer would be the best scribe. He said as much while he was examining a paper I had written and, as my writing was not as legible as his, he tacitly implied that I was his inferior and would therefore treat him with some degree of respect. I laughed at this whimsy and, not thinking him incorrigible, I took him into my service. If it had not been for that odd notion of his, I should probably have merely given him a louis and nothing more. He said that spelling was of no consequence, as those who knew how to spell could easily guess the words, while those who did not know were unable to pick out the mistakes. I laughed but, as I said nothing, he thought the laugh signified approval. In the dictation I gave him, the "Council of Trent" happened to occur. Following his system, he wrote "Trent" with a three and a nought. I burst out laughing, but he was not in the least put out, merely remarking that, the pronunciation being the same, it was of no consequence how the word was spelt. In point of fact, this lad was a fool solely through his intelli-

gence, matched with ignorance and unbounded self-confidence. I was pleased with his originality and kept him and was thus the greater fool of the two, as the reader will see.

I left Avignon next day and went straight to Marseilles, not troubling to stop at Aix. I put up at the Treize Cantons, wishing to stay for a week at least in this ancient colony of the Phocæans and to do as I liked there. With this idea I had provided myself with no letters of introduction; I had plenty of money and needed nobody's help. I told my landlord to give me a choice fish dinner in my own room, as I was aware that the fish in those parts is better than anywhere else.

I went out the next morning with a guide, to get me back to the inn when I should be tired of walking. Not heeding where I went, I reached a fine quay, I thought I was in Venice again and I felt my bosom swell, so deeply is the love of fatherland graven on the heart of every good man. I saw a number of stalls where Spanish and Levantine wines were kept, and a number of people drinking in them. A crowd of business men went hither and thither, running up against each other, crossing each other's paths, each occupied with his own business and not caring whose way he got into. Hucksters, well dressed and ill dressed, women, pretty and plain, women who stared boldly at every one, modest maidens with downcast eyes—such was the picture I saw. The mixture of nationalities, the grave Turk and the glittering Andalusian, the French dandy, the gross Negro, the crafty Greek, the dull Hollander—everything reminded me of Venice, and I enjoyed the scene.

I stopped a moment at a street corner to read a playbill and then I went back to the inn and refreshed my body with a delicious dinner, washed down with choice Syracusan wine. After dinner I dressed and took a place in the amphitheatre of the theatre.

CHAPTER 79

I NOTICED that the four principal boxes on both sides of the proscenium were adorned with pretty women, but not a single gentleman. In the interval between the first and second acts I saw gentlemen of all classes paying their devoirs to these ladies. Suddenly I heard a Knight of Malta say to a girl who was the sole occupant of a box next to me, "I will breakfast with you to-morrow, my dear."

This was enough for me. I looked at her more closely and, finding her to be a dainty morsel, I said, as soon as the knight had gone, "Will you let me come to supper?"

"With pleasure; but I have been taken in so often that I shan't await you without an earnest."

"How can I give you an earnest? I don't understand."

"You must be a newcomer here."

"Just arrived."

She laughed, called the knight and said, "Be pleased to explain to

this gentleman, who has just asked me for supper, the meaning of the word 'earnest'."

The good-natured knight explained, with a smile, that the lady, fearing lest my memory should prove defective, wanted me to pay for my supper in advance. I thanked him and asked her if a louis would be enough, and, on her replying in the affirmative, I gave her the louis and asked for her address. The knight told me politely that he would take me there himself after the theatre, adding, "She's the wantonest wench in all Marseilles."

He then asked me if I knew the town and, when I told him I had come only that day, he said he was glad to be the first to make my acquaintance. We went to the middle of the amphitheatre and he pointed out a score of girls to right and left, all of them ready to welcome the first-comer to supper. They are all on the free list and the manager finds they serve his ends, as respectable women will not sit in the boxes and they draw people to the theatre. I noticed five or six of a better type than the one I had engaged, but resolved to stick to her for the evening and make the acquaintance of the others another time.

"Is your favourite amongst them?" I said to the knight.

"No, I keep a ballet girl, and I will introduce you to her, as I am glad to say that I am free from all jealousy."

When the play came to an end, he took me to my nymph's lodging and we parted, with the understanding that we were to see more of one another.

I found the lady in *négligé*, a circumstance which went against her, for what I saw did not please me. She gave me a capital supper and enlivened me by some witty and wanton sallies which made me regard her in a most favourable light. When we had supped, she got into bed and asked me to follow her example, but I told her I never slept out.

She rang the bell and a young, charming and modest-looking girl came in. I was struck with her.

"You have a very nice maid," I remarked.

"She is only fifteen," she said, "and won't do anything."

"Will you allow me to find out for myself?"

"You may ask her if you like, but I don't think she will consent."

The girl went out to do an errand and came back with a sulky air and a kind of repugnance which made me feel interest in her. I made certain advances to her and her mistress laughed, but she was indignant and ran away in a rage, so I gave the woman two louis and left the room. The girl I had treated so cavalierly came to light me downstairs and, thinking I owed her an apology, I gave her a louis and begged her pardon. She was astonished, kissed my hand and begged me to say nothing to her mistress.

"I will not, my dear, but tell me truly whether you are still a *virgo intacta*."

"Certainly, sir."

"Wonderful! Nevertheless, you will have to make up your mind

otherwise or, in spite of your prettiness, people will not know what to make of you."

"Then come to my mother's to-morrow; I will be there. Your guide knows where she lives."

When I got outside, I asked the man if he knew her. He replied in the affirmative and said he believed her to be a virtuous girl.

"You will take me to-morrow to see her mother," I said.

Next morning he took me to the end of the town, to a poor house where I found a poor woman and poor children living on the ground floor and eating hard, black bread.

"What do you want?" said she.

• "Is your daughter here?"

"No, and what if she were? I am not her bawd."

"No, of course not, my good woman."

Just then the girl came in and the enraged mother flung at her head an old pot which was handy. Luckily it missed, but she would not have escaped her mother's talons if I had not flung myself between them. However, the old woman set up a dismal shriek, the children imitated her and the poor girl began to cry. This hubbub made my man come in.

"You hussy!" screamed the mother, "you are bringing disgrace on me; get out of my house. You are no longer my daughter!"

I was in a difficult position. The man begged her not to make such a noise, as it would draw all the neighbours about the house; but the enraged woman answered only by abuse. I drew six francs from my pocket and gave them to her, but she flung them in my face. At last I went out with the daughter, whom the old fury had seized by the hair but my man tore her free. As soon as we got outside, the mob which the uproar had attracted hooted me and followed me and no doubt I should have been torn to pieces if I had not escaped into a church, which I left by another door a quarter of an hour later. My fright saved me, for I knew the ferocity of the Provençals, and I took care not to reply a word to the storm of abuse which poured on me. I believe that I was never in greater danger than on that day.

Before I got back to my inn, I was rejoined by my servant and the girl.

"How could you lead me into such a dangerous position?" said I. "You must have known your mother was savage."

"I hoped she would behave respectfully to you."

"Be calm; don't weep any more. Tell me how I can serve you."

"I am homeless; rather than return to that horrible house I was in yesterday, I would throw myself into the sea."

"Do you know of any respectable house where I can keep her?" said I to my valet.

He told me he did know a respectable individual who let furnished apartments.

"Take me to him, then."

The man was of an advanced age and had rooms to let on all floors.

"I need only a little nook," said the girl, and the old man took us

to the highest story and opened the door of a garret, saying, "This closet is six francs a month, a month's rent to be paid in advance, and I may tell you that my door is always shut at ten o'clock and nobody can come and pass the night with you." The room held a bed with coarse sheets, two chairs, a little table and a chest of drawers.

"How much will you board this young woman for?" said I.

He asked twenty sous and two sous for the maid who would bring her meals and do her room.

"That will do," said the girl, and she paid the month's rent and the day's board. I left her, telling her I would come back again. As I went down the stairs, I asked the old man to show me a room for myself. He showed me a very nice one at a louis a month and I paid in advance. He then gave me a latchkey, that I might go and come when I liked.

"If you wish to board here," said he, "I think I could give satisfaction."

Having done this good work, I had my dinner by myself and then went to a coffee-house, where I found the amiable Knight of Malta playing. He left the game as soon as he saw me, put the fistful of gold he had won into his pocket, accosted me with the politeness natural to a Frenchman and asked how I had liked the lady who had given me my supper. I told him what had happened, at which he laughed and asked me to come and see his ballet-girl. We found her in the hairdresser's hands and she received me with the playful familiarity with which one greets an old acquaintance. I did not think much of her, but pretended to be immensely struck, with the idea of pleasing the good-natured knight.

When the hairdresser left her, it was time for her to get ready for the theatre and she dressed herself, without caring who was present. The knight helped her to change her chemise, which she allowed him to do as a matter of course, though indeed she begged me to excuse her.

As I owed her a compliment, I could think of nothing better than to tell her that, though she had not offended me, she had made me feel very uncomfortable.

"I don't believe you," said she.

"It's true all the same."

She came up to me and, claiming I had deceived her, she said, half crossly, "You are a bad fellow."

The women of Marseilles are undoubtedly the most profligate in France. They not only pride themselves on never refusing, but also on being the first to propose. This girl showed me a repeating watch, for which she had got up a lottery at twelve francs a ticket. She had ten tickets left; I took them all, and so delighted was she to get my five louis that she came and kissed me and told the knight that she would be unfaithful to him as soon as I wished.

"I am charmed to hear it," said the Maltese. He asked me to sup with her and I accepted the invitation, but the sole pleasure I had was looking at the knight make love to her. He was far inferior to Dolci!

I wished them "good night" and went to the house where I had placed the poor girl. The maid showed me to my room and I asked if I might go to the garret. She took the light, I followed her up and Rosalie, as the poor girl was named, heard my voice and opened the door. I told the maid to wait for me in my room and I went in and sat down on the bed.

"Are you contented, dear?" I said.

"I am quite happy."

"Then I hope you will be kind and find room for me in your bed."

"You may come if you like, but I must tell you that you will not find me a maid, as I have had one lover."

"You told me a lie, then?"

"Forgive me, I could not guess you would be my lover."

"I forgive you willingly."

She was as gentle as a lamb and the notion that I was master of all her treasures put fire in my veins, but her submissive air distressed me.

"How is it you do not reciprocate my desires?" said I.

"I dare not, lest you take me for a pretender."

Artifice or studied coquetry might have prompted such an answer, but the real timidity and frankness with which these words were uttered could not have been assumed. Impatient to gain possession of her, I took off my clothes, and was astonished to find her a maid.

"Why did you tell me you had a lover?" said I. "I never heard of a girl telling a lie of that sort before."

"All the same, I did not tell a lie, but I am very glad that I seem as if I had."

"Tell me all about it."

"Certainly I will, for I want to win your confidence. This is the story."

"Two years ago my mother, though hot-tempered, still loved me. I was a needle-woman and earned from twenty to thirty sous a day. Whatever I earned I gave my mother. I had never had a lover nor ever thought of such a thing and, when my goodness was praised, I felt inclined to laugh. I had been brought up from a child never to look at young men when I met them in the street and never to reply to them when they addressed any impudence to me.

"Two months ago a rather handsome young man, a native of Genoa and a merchant in a small way, came to my mother to get her to wash some very fine cotton stockings which the sea water had stained. When he saw me, he was quite complimentary, but in a very honourable way. I liked him and, no doubt seeing this, he came every evening. My mother was always present at our interviews and he looked at me and talked to me, but did not so much as ask to kiss my hand. My mother was very pleased to notice that the young man liked me, and she often scolded me because I was not polite enough to him. In time he had to go to Genoa in a small ship which belonged to him and was laden with goods. He assured us he would return again the next spring and declare his intentions. He said he hoped he should find me as well behaved as ever and still without a lover. This was enough;

at the door till midnight. When he went, I would shut the door and lie down beside my mother, who was always asleep.

"Four or five days before his departure, he took my arm and got me to go with him to a place about fifty paces from the house, to drink a glass of muscat at the tavern of a Greek, who kept open all night. We were away for only half an hour and then it was he first kissed me. When I got home, I found my mother awake and told her all, it seemed so harmless to me.

"Next day, excited by the recollection of what had happened the night before, I went with him again and love began to gain ground. We indulged in caresses which were no longer innocent, as we well knew. However, we forgave each other, as we had abstained from the chief liberty.

"The next day, my lover—as he had to journey in the night—took leave of my mother and, as soon as she was in bed, I was not long in granting what I desired as much as he. We went to the Greek's, ate and drank, and our heated senses gained love's cause; we forgot our duty and fancied our misdemeanor a triumph.

"Afterwards we fell asleep and, when we awoke, we saw our fault in the clear, cold light of day. We parted sorrowful rather than rejoicing, and the reception my mother gave me was like that you witnessed this morning. I assured her that marriage would take away the shame of my sin, and with this she took up a stick and would have done for me if I had not taken to my heels, more from instinct than from any idea of what I was doing.

"Once in the street, I knew not where to turn and, taking refuge in a church, stayed there like one in a dream till noon. Think of my position! I was hungry, I had no refuge, nothing but the clothes I wore, nothing that would get me a morsel of bread. A woman accosted me in the street. I knew her and I also knew that she kept a servants' agency. I asked her forthwith if she could get me a place.

"'I had inquiries about a maid this morning,' said she, 'but it is for a gay woman, and you are so pretty, you would have a good deal of difficulty in remaining virtuous.'

"'I can keep off the infection,' I answered, 'and, in my present position, I cannot pick and choose.'

"She thereupon took me to the lady, who was delighted to see me and still more delighted when I told her that I had never had anything to do with a man. I have repented of this lie bitterly enough, for in the week I spent at that profligate woman's house I had to endure the most humiliating insults that an honest girl ever suffered. No sooner did the men who came to the house hear that I was a maid than they longed to slake their brutal lust upon me, offering me gold if I would submit to their caresses. I refused and was reviled, but that was not all. Five or six times every day I was obliged to remain a witness of the disgusting scenes enacted between my mistress and her customers, who, when I was compelled to light them

about the house at night, overwhelmed me with insults, because I would not do them a disgusting service for a twelve-sou piece. I could not bear this sort of life much longer and was thinking of drowning myself. When you came, you treated me so ignominiously that my resolve to die was strengthened, but you were so kind and polite as you went away that I fell in love with you directly, thinking that Providence must have sent you to snatch me away from the abyss. I thought your fine presence might calm my mother and persuade her to take me back till my lover came to marry me. I was undeceived and saw that she thinks me a prostitute. Now, if you like me, I am altogether yours and I renounce my lover, of whom I am no longer worthy. Take me as your maid, I will love you and you only; I will submit myself to you and do whatever you bid me."

Whether it were weakness or virtue on my part, this tale of woe and of a mother's too great severity drew tears from my eyes and, when she saw my emotion, she wept profusely, for her heart was in need of some relief.

"I think, my poor Rosalie, you have only one chemise."

"Alas! that is all."

"Comfort yourself, my dear; all your wants shall be supplied to-morrow and in the evening you shall sup with me in my room on the second floor. I will take care of you."

"You pity me, then?"

"I fancy there is more love than pity in it."

"Would to God it were so!"

This "would to God," which came from the very depths of her soul, sent me away in a happy mood. The servant, who had been waiting for me for two hours and was looking rather glum, relaxed when she saw the colour of a crown which I gave her by way of atonement.

"Tell your master," said I, "that Rosalie will sup with me to-morrow; let us have a meatless dinner, but let it be a good one."

I returned to my inn quite in love with Rosalie and congratulated myself on having at last heard a true tale from a pretty mouth. She appeared to me so well disposed that her small failing seemed to make her shine the more. I resolved never to abandon her and I did so in all sincerity—was I not in love?

After I had had my chocolate next morning, I went out with a guide to the shops, where I got the necessary articles, paying a good, but not an excessive, price. Rosalie was only fifteen but, with her figure, her well formed breasts and her rounded arms, she would have been taken for twenty. Her shape was so imprinted on my brain that everything I got for her fitted as if she had been measured for it. This shopping took up all the morning and in the afternoon my man took her a small trunk containing two dresses, chemises, petticoats, handkerchiefs, stockings, gloves, caps, a pair of slippers, a fan, a work bag and a mantle. I was pleased at giving her such a delightful surprise

and longed for supper-time, that I might enjoy the sight of her pleasure.

The Knight of Malta came to dine with me without any ceremony and I was charmed to see him. After we had dined, he persuaded me to go to the theatre as, in consequence of the suspension of the subscription arrangements, the boxes would be filled with all the quality in Marseilles.

"There will be no loose women in the amphitheatre," said he, "as they could not get in without paying."

That decided me and I went. He presented me to a lady who entertained the best people in her home and asked me to come and see her. I excused myself, on the plea that I was leaving so shortly. Nevertheless, she was very useful to me on my second visit to Marseilles. Her name was Madame Audibert.

I did not wait for the play to end, but went where love called me. I had a delightful surprise when I saw Rosalie; I should not have known her. I cannot resist the pleasure of recalling her picture as she stood before me then, despite the years that have rolled by since that happy moment.

Rosalie was an enticing-looking brunette, above middle height. Her face was a perfect oval and exquisitely proportioned. Two fine black eyes shed a soft and ravishing light. Her eyebrows were arched and she had a wealth of hair, black and shining as ebony; her skin was white and lightly tinged with colour. On her chin was a dimple, and her slightest smile summoned into being two other dimples, one on each cheek. Her mouth was small, disclosing two rows of fairest orient pearls, and her red lips breathed forth an indefinable sweetness. The lower lip projected ever so slightly and seemed designed to hold a kiss. I have spoken of her arms, her breast and her figure, which left nothing to be desired, but I must add to this catalogue of her charms that her hand was exquisitely shaped and her foot the smallest I have ever seen. As to her other beauties, I will content myself with saying that they were in harmony with those I have described.

To see her at her best, one had to see her smiling, and hitherto she had been sad or vexed—states of mind which detract from a woman's appearance. But now sadness was gone and gratitude and pleasure had taken its place. I examined her closely and felt proud, as I saw what a transformation I had effected; but I concealed my surprise, lest she should think I had formed an unfavourable impression of her. I proceeded, therefore, to tell her that I should expose myself to ridicule if I attempted to keep a beauty like herself as a servant.

"You shall be my mistress," I said, "and my servants shall respect you as if you were my wife."

At this Rosalie, as if I had given her another being, began to try to express her gratitude for what I had done. Her words, which her tender feelings made embarrassed, increased my joy; here was no art or deceit, but simple nature.

There was no mirror in her garret, so she had dressed by her sense

of touch and I could see that she was afraid to stand up and look at herself in the mirror in my room. I knew the weak spot in all women's hearts (which men are very wrong in considering as matter for reproach) and I encouraged her to admire herself, whereupon she could not restrain a smile of satisfaction.

"I think I must be in disguise," said she, "for I have never seen myself so decked out before."

She praised the tasteful simplicity of the dress I had chosen, but was vexed at the thought that her mother would still be displeased.

"Think no more of your mother, dearest one. You look like a lady of quality and I shall be quite proud when the people in Genoa ask me if you are my daughter."

"In Genoa?"

"Yes, in Genoa. Why do you blush?"

"From surprise; perhaps I may see there one whom I have not yet forgotten."

"Would you like to stay here better?"

"No, no! Love me and be sure that I love you, and for your own sake, not from any thought of my own interests."

"You are moved, my angel; let me wipe away your tears with kisses."

She fell into my arms and relieved the various feelings of which her heart was full by weeping for some time. I did not try to console her, for she had no grief; she wept as tender souls, and women more especially, often will. We had a delicious supper, to which I did honour for two, for she ate nothing. I asked her if she was so unfortunate as not to care for good food.

"I have as good an appetite as anyone," she replied, "and an excellent digestion. You shall see for yourself when I grow more accustomed to my sudden happiness."

"At least you can drink; this wine is admirable. If you prefer Greek muscat, I will send for some. It will remind you of your lover."

"If you love me at all, I beg you will spare me that mortification."

"You shall have no more mortification from me, I promise you. It was only a joke and I beg your pardon for it."

"As I look upon you, I feel in despair at not having known you first."

"That feeling of yours, which wells forth from the depths of your candid soul, is sublime. You are beautiful and good, for you yielded to the voice of love only with the prospect of becoming his wife; and, when I think what you are to me, I am in despair at not being sure you love me. An evil genius whispers in my ear that you bear with me only because I had the happiness of helping you."

"Indeed, that is an evil genius. To be sure, if I had met you in the street, I should not have fallen head over heels in love with you, like a wanton, but you would certainly have pleased me. I am sure I love you and not for what you have done for me; for, if I were rich and you were poor, I would do anything in the world for you. But I don't

at her troubles. She kissed me at every opportunity, called me her "darling boy," her "joy," and, as the passing moment is the only real thing in this life, I enjoyed her love, I was pleased with her caresses and put away all ideas of the dreadful future, which has only one certainty—death, *ultima linea rerum*.

The second night was far sweeter than the first; she had made a good supper and drunk well, though moderately; thus she was disposed to refine on her pleasure and to deliver herself with greater ardour to all the voluptuous enjoyments which love inspires.

I gave her a pretty watch and a gold shuttle for her to amuse herself at making braid.

- "I wanted it," said she, "but I should never have dared to ask for it."

I told her that this fear of my displeasure made me doubt once more whether she really loved me. She threw herself into my arms and promised that henceforth she would show me the utmost confidence.

I was pleased to educate this young girl and felt that, when her mind had been developed, she would be perfect.

On the fourth day I warned her to hold herself in readiness to start at a moment's notice. I had said nothing about my plans to Costa or Le Duc, but Rosalie knew that I had two servants and I told her I should often make them talk on the journey for the sake of the laughter their folly would afford me.

"You, my dear," I said to her, "must be very reserved with them and not allow them to take the slightest liberty. Give them your orders as a mistress, but without pride, and you will be obeyed and respected. If they forget themselves in the slightest particular, tell me at once."

I started from the hotel of the Treize Cantons with four post-horses, Le Duc and Costa sitting on the coachman's seat. The guide, whom I had paid well for his services, took us to Rosalie's door. I got out of the carriage and, after thanking the kindly old landlord, who was sorry to lose so good a boarder, I had her get in, sat down beside her and ordered the postillions to go to Toulon, as I wished to see that fine port before returning to Italy. We got to Toulon at five o'clock.

My Rosalie behaved herself at supper like the mistress of a house accustomed to the best society. I noticed that Le Duc as head man made Costa wait upon her, but I got over him by telling my sweetheart that he would have the honour of doing her hair, as he could do it as well as the best barber in Paris. He swallowed the gilded pill and gave in with a good grace and said, with a profound bow, that he "hoped to give Madame satisfaction."

We went out next morning to see the port and were shown over the place by the commandant, whose acquaintance we made by a lucky chance. He offered his arm to Rosalie and treated her with the consideration she deserved for her appearance and the good sense of her questions. The commandant accepted my invitation to dinner, at which Rosalie spoke to the point, though not to excess, and received the polite compliments of our worthy guest with much grace. In the

afternoon he took us over to the arsenal and, after having him to dinner, I could not refuse his invitation to supper. There was no difficulty about Rosalie; the commandant introduced her immediately to his wife, his daughter and his son. I was delighted to see that her manner with ladies even surpassed her manner with gentlemen. She was one of Nature's own ladies. The commandant's wife and daughter caressed her again and again, and she received their attentions with that modest sensibility which is the seal of a good upbringing.

They asked me to dinner the next day, but I was satisfied with what I had seen, so I took leave, intending to start on the morrow.

When we got back to the inn, I told her how pleased I was with her and she threw her arms round my neck for joy.

"I am always afraid," said she, "of being asked who I am."

"You needn't be afraid, dearest; in France no gentleman or lady would think of asking such a question."

"But, if they did, what ought I to do?"

"You should make use of an evasion."

"What's an evasion?"

"A way of escaping from a difficulty without satisfying impertinent curiosity."

"Give me an example."

"Well, if such a question were asked you, you might say, 'You had better ask that gentleman'."

"I see, the question is avoided; but is not that impolite?"

"Yes; but not so impolite as it is to ask an embarrassing question."

"And what would you say if the question were passed on to you?"

"Well, my answer would vary in a ratio with the respect in which I held the questioner. I would not tell the truth, but I should say something. And I am glad to see you attentive to my lessons. Always ask questions and you will always find me ready to answer, for I want to teach you. And now let us to bed; we have to start for Antibes at an early hour, and love will reward you for the pleasure you have given me to-day."

At Antibes I hired a felucca to take me to Genoa and, as I intended to return by the same route, I had my carriage warehoused for a small monthly payment. We started early with a good wind, but, the sea becoming rough and Rosalie being mortally afraid, I had the felucca rowed into Villafranca, where I engaged a carriage to take us to Nice, that we might be well lodged. The weather held us for three days and I felt obliged to call on the commandant, an old officer named Peterson.

He gave me an excellent reception and, after the usual compliments had passed, said, "Do you know a Russian who calls himself Charles Ivanoff?"

"I saw him once at Grenoble."

"It is said that he escaped from Siberia and that he is the younger son of the Duke of Courland."

"So I have heard, but I know no proof of his claim to the title."

"He is in Genoa, where it is said a banker is to give him twenty thousand crowns. In spite of that, no one would give him a sou here, so I sent him to Genoa at my own expense, to rid the place of him."

I felt very glad that the Russian had gone away before my arrival. An officer named Ramini, who was staying at the same inn as myself, asked if I would mind taking charge of a packet which M. de St. Pierre, the Spanish consul, had to send to the Marquis Grimaldi, at Genoa. This was the nobleman I had just seen at Avignon and I was pleased to execute the commission. The same officer asked me whether I had ever seen a certain Madame Stuard.

"She came here a fortnight ago with a man who calls himself her husband. The poor devils hadn't a penny and she, a great beauty, enchanted everybody, but would give no one a smile or a word."

"I have both seen and known her," I answered. "I furnished her with the means to come here. How was she able to leave Nice without any money?"

"That's just what no one can understand. She went off in a carriage and the landlord's bill was paid. I was interested in the woman. The Marquis Grimaldi told me that she refused a hundred louis he offered her and that a Venetian of his acquaintance had fared just as badly. Perhaps that is you?"

"It is, and I gave her some money despite my treatment."

M. Peterson came to see me and was enchanted with Rosalie's amiable manner. This was another conquest for her and I duly complimented her upon it.

Nice is a terribly dull place and strangers are tormented by the midges, who prefer them to the inhabitants. However, I amused myself at a small bank of faro, which was held at a coffee-house and at which Rosalie, whose play I directed, won a score of Piedmontese pistoles. She put her little earnings into a purse and told me she liked to have some money of her own. I scolded her for not having told me so before and reminded her of her promise.

"I don't really need it," said she, "it was just a thoughtless whim of mine."

We soon made up our little quarrel.

In such ways did I make this girl my own, in the hope that for the remnant of my days she would be mine and so I should not be forced to fly from one woman to another. But inexorable Fate ordained it otherwise.

The weather grew fine again and we returned on board at evening and early the next day arrived at Genoa, which I had never seen before. I put up at St. Martin's Inn and for appearances' sake took two rooms, but they were adjoining one another. The following day I sent the packet to M. Grimaldi and a little later left my card at his palace. My guide took me to a linen draper's and I bought some stuff for Rosalie, who was in want of linen. She was very pleased with it.

We were still at table when the Marquis Grimaldi was announced; he kissed me and thanked me for bringing the parcel. His next remark

referred to Madame Stuard. I told him what had happened and he laughed, saying that he was not quite sure what he would have done under the circumstances.

I saw him looking at Rosalie attentively and I told him she was as good as she was beautiful.

"I want to find her a maid," I said, "a good seamstress, who could go out with her and above all talk Italian to her, for I want her to learn the language, that I may help her into society in Florence, Rome and Naples."

"Don't deprive Genoa of the pleasure of entertaining her," said the marquis. "I will introduce her under whatever name she pleases, and in my own house to begin with."

"She has good reasons for preserving her incognito here."

"Ah, I see! Do you think of staying here long?"

"A month, or thereabouts, and our pleasures will be limited to seeing the town and its surroundings and going to the theatre. We shall also enjoy the pleasures of the table. I hope to eat *champignons* every day; they are better here than anywhere else."

"An excellent plan. I couldn't suggest a better. I am going to see what I can do in the way of getting you a maid, mademoiselle."

"You, sir? How can I deserve such great kindness?"

"My interest in you is the greater because I think you come from Marseilles."

Rosalie blushed. She was not aware that she trilled her *r*'s and that this betrayed where she came from. I extricated her from her embarrassment by explaining this to her.

I asked the marquis how I could get the *Journal des Savants*, the *Mercure de France* and other papers of that sort. He promised to send a man who would get me all that kind of thing. He added that, if I would allow him to send me some of his excellent chocolate, he would come and breakfast with us. I said that both gift and guest were vastly agreeable to me.

As soon as he had gone, Rosalie asked me to take her to a milliner's.

"I want ribbons and other little things," said she, "but I should like to bargain for them and pay for them out of my own money, without your having anything to do with it."

"Do whatever you like, my dear, and afterwards we will go to the play."

The milliner to whom we went proved to be a Frenchwoman. It was a charming sight to see Rosalie shopping. She put on an important air, seemed to know all about it, ordered bonnets in the latest fashion, bargained and contrived to spend five or six louis with great grandeur. As we left the shop, I told her that I had been taken for her footman and I meant to be revenged. So saying, I made her come into a jeweller's, where I bought her a necklace, earrings and brooches in imitation diamonds and, without letting her say a word, I paid the price and left the shop.

"You have bought me some beautiful things," said she, "but you are

too lavish with your money; if you had bargained, you might have saved four louis at least."

"Very likely, dearest, but I never was any hand at a bargain."

I took her to the play, but, as she did not understand the language, she got dreadfully tired and asked me to take her home at the end of the first act, which I did very willingly. When we got in, I found a box waiting for me from M. Grimaldi. It proved to contain twenty-four pounds of chocolate. Costa, who had boasted of his skill in making chocolate in the Spanish fashion, received orders to make us three cups in the morning.

At nine o'clock the marquis arrived with a tradesman, who sold me some beautiful oriental materials. I gave them to Rosalie to make two *mezzari* for herself. The *mezzaro* is a kind of hooded cloak worn by the Genoese women, as the *cendal* is worn at Venice, and the *mantilla* at Madrid.

I thanked M. Grimaldi for the chocolate, which was excellent; Costa was quite proud of the praise the marquis gave him. Le Duc came in to announce a woman, whose name I did not know.

"It's the mother of the maid I have engaged," said M. Grimaldi.

She came in and I saw before me a well dressed woman, followed by a girl from twenty to twenty-four years old, who pleased me at the first glance. The mother thanked the marquis and presented her daughter to Rosalie, enumerating her good qualities and telling her she would serve her well and walk with her when she wished to go out.

"My daughter," she added, "speaks French and you will find her a good, faithful and obliging girl."

She ended by saying that her daughter had been in service with a lady and would be obliged if she might have her meals by herself.

The girl was named Véronique. Rosalie told her that she was a good girl and that the only way to be respected was to be respectable. Véronique kissed her hand, the mother went away and Rosalie took the girl into her room to begin her work.

I did not forget to thank the marquis, for he had evidently chosen a maid more with a view to my likings than to those of my sweetheart. I told him that I should not fail to call on him and he replied that he would be happy to see me at any hour and that I should easily find him at his casino at St. Pierre d'Arena, where he often spent the night.

CHAPTER 80

WHEN the marquis had gone, seeing Rosalie engaged with Véronique, I set myself to translate *L'Ecossaise* for the actors in Genoa, who seemed pretty good ones, to play.

I found Rosalie looking sad at dinner and said:

"What is the matter, dearest? You know I do not like to see you looking melancholy."

"I am vexed at Véronique's being prettier than I."

"I can guess what you mean and I like it. But console yourself; in my eyes Véronique is nothing compared to you. You are my only beauty; but to reassure you I will ask M. Grimaldi to tell her mother to come and fetch her away and get me another maid as ugly as possible."

"Oh, no! pray do not do so; he will think I am jealous and I wouldn't have him think so for the world."

"Well, well, smile again if you do not wish to vex me."

"I shall soon do that, since you assure me she will not make me lose your love. But what made the old gentleman get me a girl like that? Do you think he did it out of mischief?"

"No, I don't think so. I am sure, on the other hand, that he wanted to show you that you need not fear being compared with anybody. Are you pleased with her in other respects?"

"She works well and is very respectful. She does not speak four words without addressing me as *signora* and she is careful to translate what she says from Italian into French. I hope that in a month I shall speak well enough for us to dispense with her services when we go to Florence. I have ordered Le Duc to clear out the room I have chosen for her and I will send her her dinner from our own table. I will be kind to her, but I hope you will not make me wretched."

"I could not do so; and I do not see what there can be in common between the girl and myself."

"Then you will pardon my fears."

"All the more readily because they show your love."

"I thank you, but keep my secret."

I promised never to give a glance at Véronique, of whom I was already afraid, but I loved Rosalie and would have done anything to save her the least grief.

I set to at my translation after dinner; it was work I liked. I did not go out that day and spent the whole of the next morning with M. Grimaldi.

I went to the banker Belloni and changed all my gold into *gigliati* sequins. I made myself known after the money was changed and the head cashier treated me with great courtesy. I had bills on this banker for forty thousand Roman crowns, and on Lepri I had bills for twenty thousand.

Rosalie did not want to go to the play again, so I got her a piece of embroidery to amuse her in the evening. The theatre was a necessity for me; I always went unless it interfered with some still sweeter pleasure. I went by myself and, when I got home, I found the marquis talking to my mistress. I was pleased and, after I had embraced the worthy nobleman, I complimented Rosalie on having kept him till my arrival, adding gently that she should have put down her work.

"Ask him," she replied, "if he did not make me keep on. He said he would go if I didn't, so I gave in to keep him."

She then rose, stopped working and in the course of an interesting conversation she succeeded in making the marquis promise to stay to

supper, thus forestalling my intention. He was not accustomed to take anything at that hour and ate little, but I saw he was enchanted with my treasure and that pleased me, for I did not think I had anything to fear from a man of sixty; besides, I was glad of the opportunity of accustoming Rosalie to good society. I wanted her to be a little coquettish, as a woman never pleases in society unless she shows a desire to please.

Although the position was quite a strange one for her, she made me admire the natural aptitude of women, which may be improved or spoiled by art, but which exists more or less in them all, from the throne to the milk pail. She talked to M. Grimaldi in a way that seemed to hint she was willing to give him a little hope. As our guest did not eat, she said graciously that he must come to dinner some day, that she might have an opportunity of seeing whether he really had any appetite.

When he had gone, I took her on my lap and, covering her with kisses, asked where she had learnt to talk to great people so well.

"It's an easy matter," she replied. "Your eyes speak to my soul and tell me what to do and say."

A professed rhetorician could not have answered more elegantly or more flatteringly.

I finished the translation; I had it copied out by Costa and took it to Rossi, the manager, who said he would put it on direct when I told him I was going to make him a present of the play. I named the actors of my choice and asked him to bring them to dine with me at my inn, that I might read the play and distribute the parts.

As will be guessed, my invitation was accepted and Rosalie enjoyed dining with the actors and actresses, and especially hearing herself called "Madame Casanova" every moment. Véronique explained for her everything she did not understand.

When my actors were round me in a ring, they begged me to tell them their parts, but I would not give in on this point.

"The first thing to be done," said I, "is for you to listen attentively to the whole piece without minding about your parts. When you know the whole play, I will satisfy your curiosity."

I knew that careless or idle actors often pay no attention to anything except their own parts and thus a piece, though well played in its parts, is badly rendered as a whole.

They submitted with a tolerably good grace, which the high and mighty players of the Comédie Française would certainly not have done. Just as I was beginning my reading the Marquis de Grimaldi and the banker Belloni came in to call on me. I was glad for them to be present at the trial, which lasted only an hour and a quarter.

After I had heard the opinion of the actors, who by their praise of various situations showed me that they had taken in the plot, I told Costa to distribute the parts; but, no sooner was this done, than the first actor and the first actress began to express their displeasure—she, because I had given her the part of Lady Alton; he because I had not

given him Murray's part—but they had to bear it as it was my will. I pleased everybody by asking them all to dinner for the day after the morrow, the piece to be rehearsed after dinner for the first time.

The banker Belloni asked me to dinner for the following day, including in the invitation my lady, who excused herself with great politeness; and M. Grimaldi was glad to take my place at dinner at her request.

When I got to M. Belloni's, I was greatly surprised to see the impostor Ivanoff, who, instead of pretending not to know me, as he ought to have done, came forward to embrace me. I stepped back and bowed, which might have been put down to a feeling of respect, although my coldness and scant ceremony would have convinced any observant eye of the contrary. He was well dressed but seemed sad, though he talked a good deal and to some purpose, especially on politics. The conversation turned on the Court of Russia, where Elizabeth Petrovna reigned; he said nothing, but sighed and turned away, pretending to wipe the tears from his eyes. At dessert he asked me if I had heard anything of Madame Morin, adding, as if to recall the circumstance to my memory, that we had supped together there.

"I believe she is quite well," I answered.

His servant, in yellow and red livery, waited on him at table. After dinner he contrived to tell me that he had a matter of the greatest importance he wanted to discuss with me.

"My only desire, sir, is to avoid all appearance of knowing anything about you."

"One word from you will gain me a hundred thousand crowns, and you shall have half."

I turned my back on him and saw him no more in Genoa.

When I got back to the inn, I found M. Grimaldi giving Rosalie a lesson in Italian.

"She has given me an exquisite dinner," said he. "You must be very happy with her."

In spite of his honourable demeanour, M. Grimaldi was in love with her, but I thought I had nothing to fear. Before he went, she invited him to come to the rehearsal next day.

When the actors came, I noticed amongst them a young man whose face I did not know and, on my inquiring, Rossi told me he was the prompter.

"I won't have any prompter; send him about his business."

"We can't get on without him."

"You'll have to; I will be the prompter."

The prompter was dismissed, but the three actresses began to complain.

"Even if we knew our parts as well as the *pater noster*, we should be certain to come to a dead stop if the prompter were not in his box."

"Very good," said I to the actress who was to play Lindane, "I will occupy the box myself, but I shall see your pantalettes."

"You would have some difficulty doing that," said the first actor. "She doesn't wear any."

"So much the better."

"You know nothing about it," said the actress.

These remarks put us all in high spirits and the ministers of Thalia ended by promising that they would dispense with a prompter. I was pleased with the way the piece was read and they said they would be letter-perfect in three days. But something happened.

On the day fixed for the rehearsal they came without the Lindane and Murray. They were not well, but Rossi said they would not fail us eventually. I took the part of Murray and asked Rosalie to be the Lindane.

"I don't read Italian well enough," she whispered, "and I don't wish to have the actors laughing at me; but Véronique could do it."

"Ask if she will read the part."

However, Véronique said that she could repeat it by heart.

"All the better," said I to her, laughing internally, as I thought of Soleure, for I saw that I should thus be obliged to make love to the girl to whom I had not spoken for the fortnight she had been with us. I had not even had a good look at her face. I was so afraid of Rosalie (whom I loved better every day) taking alarm.

What I had feared happened. When I took Véronique's hand and said, "*Si, bella Lindana, debbe adorarvi!*" everybody clapped because I gave the words their proper expression; but, glancing at Rosalie, I saw a shadow on her face and I was angry at not having controlled myself better. Nevertheless, I could not help feeling amazed at the way Véronique played the part. When I told her that I adored her, she blushed up to her eyes; she could not have played the lovesick girl better.

We fixed a day of the dress rehearsal at the theatre and the company announced the first night a week in advance, to excite public curiosity. The bills ran:

We shall give Voltaire's "Ecoissaise," translated by an anonymous author. It will be played without a prompter.

I cannot give the reader any idea of the trouble I had to quiet Rosalie. She refused to be comforted, wept incessantly and touched my heart by gentle reproaches.

"You love Véronique," said she, "and you translated that play only to have an opportunity of declaring your love."

I succeeded in convincing her that she wronged me and at last, after I had lavished caresses on her, she suffered herself to be calmed. Next morning she begged pardon for her jealousy and, to cure it, insisted on my speaking constantly to Véronique. Her heroism went farther. She got up before me and sent me my coffee by Véronique, who was as astonished as I was.

At heart Rosalie was a great creature, capable of noble resolves, but, like all women, she gave way to sudden emotions. From that day she gave me no more signs of jealousy and treated her maid with more

kindness than ever. Véronique was an intelligent and well mannered girl and, if my heart had not been already occupied, she would have reigned there.

The first night of the play I took Rosalie to a box and she would have Véronique with her. M. Grimaldi did not leave her for a moment. The play was praised to the skies; the large theatre was full of the best people in Genoa. The actors surpassed themselves, though they had no prompter, and were loudly applauded. The play ran five nights and was given to full houses. Rossi, hoping perhaps that I would make him a present of another play, asked leave to give my lady a superb pelisse of lynx-fur, which pleased her immensely.

I would have done anything to spare my sweetheart the least anxiety, and yet from my want of thought I contrived to vex her. I should never have forgiven myself if Providence had not ordained that I should be the cause of her final happiness.

"I have reason to suspect," she said, one day, "that I am with child and I am enchanted at the thought of giving you a dear pledge of my love."

"If it comes at such and such a time, it will be mine and I assure you I shall love it dearly."

"And if it comes two or three weeks sooner, you will not be sure that you are the parent?"

"Not quite sure; but I shall love it just as well and look upon it as my child as well as yours."

"I am sure you must be the father. It is impossible the child can be Petri's, for he knew me only once and then very imperfectly, whilst you and I have lived in tender love for so long a time."

She wept hot tears.

"Calm yourself, dearest, I implore you! You are right; it cannot be Petri's child. You know I love you and I cannot doubt that you are with child by me and by me alone. If you give me a baby as pretty as yourself, it will be mine indeed. Calm yourself."

"How can I be calm when you can have such a suspicion?"

We said no more about it, but, in spite of my tenderness, my caresses and all the trifling cares which bear witness to love, she was often sad and thoughtful. How many times I reproached myself bitterly for having let out my silly calculations!

A few days later she gave me a sealed letter, saying:

"The servant gave me this letter while you were not present. I am offended by his doing so and want you to avenge me."

I called the man and said, "Where did you get this letter?"

"From a young man who is unknown to me. He gave me a crown and begged me to give the letter to the lady without your seeing me, and he promised to give me two crowns more if I brought him a reply to-morrow. I did not think I was doing wrong, sir, as the lady was at perfect liberty to tell you."

"That's all very well, but you must go, since the lady (who gave me the letter unopened, as you can see for yourself) is offended with you."

I called Le Duc, who paid the man and sent him away. I opened the letter and found it to be from Petri. Rosalie left my side, not wishing to read the contents. The letter ran as follows:

"I have seen you, my dear Rosalie. It was just as you were coming out of the theatre, escorted by the Marquis de Grimaldi, who is my godfather. I did not deceive you: I was intending all along to come and marry you in Marseilles next spring, as I had promised. I love you faithfully and, if you are still my kind Rosalie, I am ready to marry you here in the presence of my kinsfolk. If you have done wrong, I promise never to speak of it, for I know that it was I who led you astray. Tell me, I entreat you, whether I may speak to the Marquis de Grimaldi with regard to you. I am ready to receive you from the hands of the gentleman with whom you are living, provided you are not his wife. Remember, if you are still free, that you recover your honour as soon as you marry your seducer."

"This letter comes from an honourable man who is worthy of Rosalie," I thought to myself, "and that's more than I shall be, unless I marry her myself. But Rosalie must decide."

I called her to me, gave her the letter and begged her to read it attentively. She did so and gave it back to me, asking if I advised her to accept Petri's offer.

"If you do, dear Rosalie, I shall die of grief; but, if I do not yield you, my honour bids me marry you and that I am quite ready to do."

At this, the charming girl threw herself on my breast, crying in the voice of true love:

"I love you and you alone, darling; but it is not true that your honour bids you marry me. Ours is a marriage of the heart; our love is mutual and that is enough for my happiness."

"Dear Rosalie, I adore you, but I am the best judge of my own honour. If Petri is a well-to-do man and a man who would make you happy, I must either give you up or take you myself."

"No, no; there is no hurry to decide. If you love me, I am happy, for I love you and none other. I shall not answer the letter and I don't want to hear anything more of Petri."

"You may be sure that I will say no more of him, but I am sure that the marquis will have a hand in it."

"I dare say, but he won't speak to me twice on the subject."

After this treaty, a more sincere one than those the Powers of Europe make, I resolved to leave Genoa as soon as I got some letters for Florence and Rome. In the meanwhile all was peace and love between myself and Rosalie. She had not the slightest shadow of jealousy in her soul and M. Grimaldi was the sole witness of our happiness.

Five or six days later I went to see the marquis at his casino at St. Pierre d'Arena and he accosted me by saying that he was happy to see me, as he had an important matter he wished to discuss with me. I guessed what it would be but begged him to explain himself. He then spoke as follows:

"A worthy merchant of the town brought his nephew, a young man

named Petri, to see me two days ago. He told me that "the young man is my godson, which I recalled readily, and he asked me to protect him I answered that, as his godfather, I owed the youth my protection and I promised to do what I could.

"He left me to talk it over with my godson, who informed me that he knew your mistress before you did in Marseilles, that he had promised to marry her next spring, that he had seen her in my company and that, having followed us, he found out that she was living with you. He was told that she was your wife, but, not believing it, he wrote her a letter saying that he was ready to marry her, but this letter fell into your hands and he has had no reply to it.

"He could not make up his mind to lose a hope which made his happiness, so he resolved to ascertain through my good offices whether Rosalie would accept his proposition. He flatters himself that, on his informing me of his prosperous condition, I shall feel able to guarantee you that he is in a position to make a wife happy. I told him that I knew you and would speak to you on the matter and then inform him of the result of our interview.

"I have made inquiries into his situation and find that he has already amassed a considerable sum of money. His credit, morals and reputation are all excellent; besides, he is his uncle's sole heir and the uncle passes for a man very comfortably off. And now, my dear M. Casanova, tell me what answer I am to make."

"Tell him that Rosalie is much obliged to him and begs him to forget her. We are going away in three or four days. Rosalie loves me, and I, her, and I am ready to marry her whenever she likes."

"That's plain speaking, but I should have thought a man like you would prefer freedom to a woman, however beautiful, to whom you would be bound by indissoluble ties. Will you allow me to speak to Rosalie myself about it?"

"You need not ask my leave; speak to her, but in your own person and not as representing my opinions. I adore her and would not have her think that I could cherish the thought of separating from her."

"If you don't want me to meddle in the matter, tell me so frankly."

"On the contrary, I wish you to see for yourself that I am not the tyrant of the woman I adore."

"I will talk to her to-night."

I did not come home till supper-time, that the marquis might say what he had to say in perfect freedom. The noble Genoese supped with us and the conversation turned on indifferent subjects. After he had gone, my sweetheart told me what had passed between them. He had spoken to her in almost the same words that he had addressed to me and our replies were nearly identical, though she had requested the marquis to say no more about his godson, to which request he had assented.

We thought the matter settled and busied ourselves with preparations for our departure, but three or four days after the marquis (who we imagined had forgotten all about his godson) came and

asked us to dine with him at St. Pierre d'Arena, where Rosalie had never been.

"I want you to see my beautiful garden before you go," said M. Grimaldi to her. "It will be for me one more pleasant recollection of your stay."

We went to see him at noon the next day. He was with an elderly man and woman, to whom he introduced us. He introduced me by name and Rosalie as a person who belonged to me.

We proceeded to walk in the garden, where the two old people got Rosalie between them and overwhelmed her with politeness and complimentary remarks. She, who was happy and in high spirits, answered in Italian and delighted them by her intelligence and by the grace which she gave to her mistakes in grammar.

The servants came to tell us that dinner was ready, and what was my astonishment, on entering the room, to see the table laid for six! I did not need much insight now to see through the marquis's trick, but it was too late. We sat down and just then a young man came in.

"You are a little late," said the marquis; and then, without waiting for his apology, he introduced him to me as M. Petri, his godson and nephew to his other guests, and he made him sit down at his left hand, Rosalie being on his right. I sat opposite to her and, seeing that she turned as pale as death, the blood rushed to my face; I was terribly enraged. This petty despot's plot seemed disgraceful to me; it was a scandalous insult to Rosalie and myself, an insult which should be washed away in blood. I was tempted to stab him at his table, but in spite of my agitation I restrained myself. What could I do—take Rosalie's arm and leave the room with her? I thought it over, but, foreseeing the consequences, I could not summon up courage.

I have never spent so terrible an hour as at that fatal dinner. Neither Rosalie nor myself ate a morsel, and the marquis, who helped all the guests, was discreet enough not to see that we left one course after another untouched. Throughout the dinner he spoke only to Petri and his uncle, giving them opportunities for saying how large a trade they were doing. At dessert the marquis told the young man that he had better go and look after his affairs and, after kissing his hand, he withdrew with a bow, to which nobody replied.

Petri was about twenty-four, of moderate height, with ordinary but yet good-natured and honest features, respectful in his manner, and sensible though not witty in what he said. After all was said and done, I thought him worthy of Rosalie, but I shuddered at the thought that, if she became his wife, she was lost to me forever. After he had gone, the marquis said he was sorry he had not known the young man before, as he might have helped him in his business.

"However, we will see to that in the future," said he, meaningly. "I mean to make his fortune."

At this the uncle and aunt, who no doubt knew what to say, began to laud and extol their nephew and ended by saying that, as they had

no children, they were delighted that Petri, who would be their heir, was to have His Excellency's patronage

"We are longing," they added, "to see the girl from Marseilles he is going to marry. We should welcome her as a beloved daughter."

Rosalie whispered to me that she could bear it no longer and begged me to take her away. We rose and, after we had saluted the company with cold dignity, we left the room. The marquis was visibly disconcerted. As he escorted us to the door, he stammered out compliments, for the want of something to say, telling Rosalie that he should not have the honour of seeing her that evening, but he hoped to call on her the next day.

When we were by ourselves, we seemed to breathe again and spoke to one another to relieve ourselves of the oppression which weighed on our minds.

Rosalie thought, as well as I, that the marquis had played us a shameful trick and she told me I ought to write him a note, begging him not to give himself the trouble of calling on us again.

"I will find some means of vengeance," said I, "but I don't think it would be a good plan to write to him. We will hasten our preparations for leaving and receive him to-morrow with that cold politeness which bears witness to indignation. Above all, we will not make the slightest reference to his godson."

"If Petri really loves me," said she, "I pity him. I think he is a good fellow and I don't feel angry with him for being present at that dinner, as he was possibly unaware that his presence was likely to give me offence. But I still shudder when I think of it. I thought I should die when our eyes met! Throughout the dinner he could not see my eyes, as I kept them nearly shut, and indeed he could hardly see me. Did he look at me while he was talking?"

"No, he looked only at me. I am as sorry for him as you are, for, as you say, he looks an honest fellow."

"Well, it's over now and I hope I shall have a good appetite for supper. Did you notice what the aunt said? I am sure she was in the plot. She thought she would gain me over by saying she was ready to treat me like her own child. She was a decent-looking woman, too."

We had a good supper, and a pleasant night inclined us to forget the insult the marquis had put upon us. When we woke up in the morning, we laughed at it. The marquis came to see us in the evening and, greeting me with an air of mingled embarrassment and vexation, he said that he knew he had done wrong in surprising me as he had, but that he was ready to do anything in his power by way of atonement and to give whatever satisfaction I liked.

Rosalie did not give me time to answer. "If you really feel," said she, "that you have insulted us, that is enough; we are amply avenged. But all the same, sir, we shall be on our guard against you in future, though that will be but a short while, as we are soon leaving."

With this proud reply she made him a low bow and left the room.

When he was left alone with me, M. Grimaldi addressed me as follows:

"I take a great interest in your mistress's welfare; and, as I feel sure that she cannot long be happy in her present uncertain position, whereas I am certain she would make my godson an excellent wife, I was determined that both of you should make his acquaintance, for Rosalie herself knows very little of him. I confess that the means I employed were dishonourable, but you will pardon the means for the sake of the excellent end I had in view. I hope you will have a pleasant journey and that you may live for a long time in uninterrupted happiness with your charming mistress. I hope you will write to me and always reckon on my remaining your friend and doing everything in my power for you. Before I go, I will tell you something which will give you an idea of the excellent disposition of young Petri, to whose happiness Rosalie seems essential.

"He told me the following, only after I had absolutely refused to take charge of a letter he had written to Rosalie, despairing of being able to send it any other way. After assuring me that Rosalie had loved him and consequently could not have any fixed aversion for him, he added that, if the fear of being with child was the reason why she would not marry him, he would agree to put off the marriage till after the child was born, provided she would agree to stay in Genoa in hiding, her presence to be unknown to all save himself. He offers to pay all the expenses of her stay. He made a remarkably wise reflection when we were talking it over. 'If she gave birth to a child too soon after our marriage,' said he, 'both her honour and mine would suffer hurt; she might also lose the affection of my relatives and, if Rosalie is to be my wife, I want her to be happy in everything'."

At this Rosalie, who had no doubt been listening at the door after the manner of her sex, burst into the room and astonished me by the following speech:

"If M. Petri did not tell you that it was possible I might be with child by him, he is a right honest man, but now I tell you so myself. I do not think it likely, but still it is possible. Tell him, sir, that I will remain in Genoa until the child is born, in the case of my being pregnant (of which I have no certain knowledge) or until I am quite sure that I am not with child. If I do have a child, the truth will be made known. In the case of there being no doubt of M. Petri's being the father, I am ready to marry him, but, if he sees for himself that the child is not his, I hope he will be reasonable enough to let me alone in future. As to the expenses and my lodgings at Genoa, tell him that he need not trouble himself about either."

I was petrified. I saw the consequence of my own imprudent words, and my heart was broken. The marquis asked me if this decision was given with my authority and I replied that, as my sweetheart's will was mine, he might take her words for law. He went away in high glee, for he foresaw that all would go well with his plans when once he

should be able to exert his influence on Rosalie. The absent always fare ill.

"You want to leave me, then, Rosalie?" said I, when we were alone.

"Yes, dearest, but it will not be for long."

"I think we shall never see each other again."

"Why not, dearest? You have only to remain faithful to me. Listen to me. Your honour and my own make it imperative that I should convince Petri that I am not with child by him, and you that I am with child by you."

"I have never doubted it, dear Rosalie."

"Yes, dear, you doubted it once and that's enough. Our parting will cost me many a bitter tear, but these pangs are necessary to my future happiness. I hope you will write to me and, after the child is born, it will be for you to decide how I shall rejoin you. If I am not pregnant, I will rejoin you in a couple of months at latest."

"Though I may grieve at your resolve, I will not oppose it, for I promised I would never cross you. I suppose you will go into a convent; the marquis must find you a suitable one and protect you like a father. Shall I speak to him on the subject? I will leave you as much money as you will need"

"That will not be much. As for M. Grimaldi, he is in honour bound to procure me an asylum. I don't think it will be necessary for you to speak to him about it."

She was right and I could not help admiring the truly astonishing tact of this girl.

In the morning I heard that the self-styled Ivanoff had made his escape an hour before the police were to arrest him at the suit of the banker, who had found out that one of the bills he had presented was forged. He had escaped on foot, leaving all his baggage behind him.

Next day the marquis came to tell Rosalie that his godson had no objection to make to her plan. He added that the young man hoped she would become his wife, whether the child proved to be his or not.

"He may hope as much as he likes," said Rosalie, with a smile.

"He also hopes that you will allow him to call on you now and then. I have spoken to my kinswoman, the Mother Superior of S— convent. You are to have two rooms and a very good sort of woman is to keep you company, wait on you and nurse you when the time comes. I have paid the amount you are to pay every month for your board. Every morning I will send you a confidential man, who will see your companion and bring me your orders. And I myself will come and see you at the grating as often as you please."

It was then my sad duty, which the laws of politeness enjoined, to thank the marquis for his trouble.

"'Tis to you, my lord," said I, "I entrust Rosalie. I am placing her, I am sure, in good hands. I will go on my way as soon as she is in the convent; I hope you will write a letter to the Mother Superior for her to take."

"I will write it directly," said he.

And, as Rosalie had told him before that she would pay for everything herself, he gave her a written copy of the agreement he had made.

"I have resolved," said Rosalie to the marquis, "to go into the convent to-morrow and I shall be very glad to have a short visit from you the day after."

"I will be there," said the marquis, "and you may be sure I will do all in my power to make your stay agreeable."

The night was a sad one for both of us. Love scarcely made a pause amidst our alternate complaints and consolations. We swore to be faithful forever and our oaths were sincere, as ardent lovers' oaths always are. But they are as naught unless they are sealed by destiny, and that no mortal mind may know.

Rosalie, whose eyes were red and wet with tears, spent most of the morning in packing up with Véronique, who cried, too. I did not look at the latter, as I felt angry with myself for thinking how pretty she was. Rosalie would take only two hundred sequins, telling me that, if she needed more, she could easily let me know.

She told Véronique to look after me well for the two or three days I should spend in Genoa, made me a mute curtsy, and went out with Costa to get a sedan chair. Two hours after a servant of the marquis came to fetch her belongings and I was thus left alone and full of grief till the marquis came and asked me to invite him to supper, suggesting that Véronique should be asked in to keep us company.

"That's a rare girl," said he, "you really don't know her and you ought to know her better."

Although I was rather surprised, I did not stop to consider what the motives of the crafty Genoese might be and I went and asked Véronique to come in. She replied politely that she would do so, adding that she knew how great an honour I did her.

I should have been the blindest of men if I had not seen that the clever marquis had succeeded in his well laid plans and had duped me as if I had been the merest freshman. Although I hoped with all my heart that I should get Rosalie back again, I had good reasons for suspecting that all the marquis's wit would be employed to seduce her, and I could not help thinking that he would succeed. Nevertheless, in the position I was in, I could only keep my fears to myself and let him do his utmost.

He was nearly sixty, a thorough disciple of Epicurus, a heavy player, rich, eloquent, a master of statecraft, highly popular in Genoa and well acquainted with the hearts of men, and still more so with the hearts of women. He had spent a good deal of time in Venice, to be more at liberty and enjoy the pleasures of life at his ease. He had never married and, when asked the reason, would reply that he knew too well that women would be either tyrants or slaves and he did not want to be a tyrant to any woman, nor to be under any woman's orders. He later found a way to return to his beloved Venice, in spite of the law forbidding any noble who has filled the office of doge to leave his native soil. Though he behaved to me in a very friendly manner, he knew how

to maintain an air of superiority which impressed me. Nothing else could have given him the courage to ask me to dinner when Petri was to be present. I felt that I had been tricked and I thought myself in duty bound to make him esteem me by my behaviour in future. It was gratitude on his part which made him smooth the way to my conquest of Véronique, who doubtless struck him as a fit and proper person to console me for the loss of Rosalie.

I did not take any part in the conversation at supper, but the marquis drew out Véronique and she shone. It was easy for me to see that she had more wit and knowledge of the world than Rosalie, but in my state of mind this grieved rather than rejoiced me. M. Grimaldi seemed sorry to see me melancholy and forced me, as it were, to join in the conversation. As he was reproaching me in a friendly manner for my silence, Véronique said, with a pleasing smile, that I had good reason to be silent after the declaration of love I had made to her and which she had received so ill. I was astonished at this and said that I did not remember having ever made her such a declaration, but she made me laugh in spite of myself, when she said that her name that day was Lindane.

"Ah! that's in a play," said I. "In real life the man who declares his love in words is a simpleton; 'tis with deeds the true lover shows his love."

"Very true, but your lady was frightened all the same."

"No, no, Véronique, she is very fond of you."

"I know she is; but I have seen her jealous of me."

"If so, she was quite wrong."

This dialogue, which pleased me little, fell sweetly on the marquis's ears; he told me he was going to call on Rosalie next morning and, if I liked to invite him for supper, he would come and tell me about her in the evening. Of course I told him he would be welcome.

After Véronique had lighted me to my room, she asked me to let my servants wait on me, as, if she did so now that my lady was gone, people might talk about her.

"You are right," said I. "Kindly send Le Duc to me."

Next morning I had a letter from Geneva. It came from my Epicurean syndic, who had presented M. de Voltaire with my translation of his play, with an exceedingly polite letter from me, in which I begged his pardon for having taken the liberty of travestying his fine French prose in Italian. The syndic told me plainly that M. de Voltaire had pronounced my translation to be a bad one.

My self-esteem was so wounded by this and by his impoliteness in not answering my letter (with which he could certainly find no fault, whatever his criticism of my translation might be) that I became the sworn enemy of the great Voltaire. I have censured him in all the works I have published, thinking that, in wronging him, I was avenging myself, to such an extent did passion blind me. At the present time I feel that, even if my works survive, these feeble stings of mine can hurt nobody but myself. Posterity will class me amongst the Zoïluses

whose own impotence made them attack this great man, to whom civilisation and human happiness owe so much. The only crime that can truthfully be alleged against Voltaire is his attack on religion. If he had been a true philosopher, he would never have spoken on such matters, for, even if his attacks were based on truth, religion is necessary to morality, without which there can be no happiness.

CHAPTER 81

I HAVE never liked eating by myself and thus I never turned hermit, though I once thought of turning monk—a trade like any other, and perhaps the best of all, when without renouncing certain pleasures of life, one can live well in a kind of holy idleness. This dislike of loneliness made me give orders that the table should be laid for two and, indeed, after supping with the marquis and myself, Véronique had some right to expect as much, to say nothing of those rights which her wit and beauty gave her.

I saw only Costa and asked him what had become of Le Duc. He said he was ill. "Then go behind the lady's chair," said I. He obeyed but smiled as he did so. Pride is a universal failing and, though a servant's pride is the silliest of all, it is often pushed to the greatest extremes.

I thought Véronique prettier than before. Her behaviour, now free and now reserved as the occasion demanded, showed me that she was no new hand and that she could have played the part of princess in the best society. Nevertheless—so strange a thing is the heart of a man—I was sorry to find I liked her and my only consolation was that her mother was to come and take her away before the day was over. I had adored Rosalie and my heart still bled at the thought of our parting.

The girl's mother came while we were still at table. She was astounded at the honour I showed her daughter, and she overwhelmed me with thanks.

"You owe me no gratitude," said I to her. "Your daughter is clever, good and beautiful."

"Thank the gentleman for his compliment," said the mother; "for you are really stupid, wanton and ugly." And then she added, "But how could you have the face to sit at table with the gentleman in a dirty chemise?"

"I should blush, mother, if I thought you were right; but I put a clean one on only two hours ago."

"Madame," said I to the mother, "the chemise cannot look white beside your daughter's whiter skin."

This made the mother laugh and pleased the girl immensely. When the mother told her that she was come to take her back. Véronique said, with a sly smile, "How do you know the gentleman will be pleased at my leaving him twenty-four hours before he goes away?"

"On the contrary," said I, "I should be very vexed."

"Well, then, she can stay, sir," said the mother. "But for decency's sake I must send her younger sister to sleep with her."

"If you please," I rejoined. And with that I left them.

The thought of Véronique troubled me, as I knew I was taken with her and what I had to dread was a calculated resistance.

The mother came into my room where I was writing and wished me a pleasant journey, telling me for the second time that she was going to send her daughter Annette. The girl came in the evening, accompanied by a servant and, after lowering her *mezzaro* and kissing my hand respectfully, she ran gaily to kiss her sister.

I wanted to see what she was like and called for candles and, on their being brought, I found she was a blonde of a kind I had never before seen. Her hair, eyebrows and eyelashes were the colour of pale gold, fairer almost than her skin, which was extremely delicate. She was very shortsighted, but her large, pale-blue eyes were wonderfully beautiful. She had the smallest mouth imaginable, but her teeth, though regular, were not so white as her skin. But for this defect, Annette might have passed for a perfect beauty.

Her shortness of sight made too brilliant a light painful to her and, as she stood before me, she seemed to like me looking at her. My gaze fed hungrily on the two little half-spheres, which were not yet ripe but so white as to make me guess how ravishing the rest of her body must be. Véronique did not show her breasts so freely. One could see that she was superbly shaped, but everything was carefully hidden from the gaze. She made her sister sit down beside her and work, but, when I saw that she was obliged to hold the stuff close to her face, I told her that she should spare her eyes for that night at all events, and with that she obediently put the work down.

The marquis came as usual and, like myself, he thought Annette, whom he had never seen before, an astonishing miniature beauty. Taking advantage of his age and high rank, the voluptuous old man dared to pass his hand over her breast and she, who was too respectful to cross my lord, let him do it without making the slightest objection. She was a compound of innocence and coquetry.

The woman who, showing little, succeeds in making a man want to see more, has accomplished three-fourths of the task of making him fall in love with her; for is love anything else than a kind of curiosity? I think not, and what makes me certain is that, when the curiosity is satisfied, the love disappears. Love, however, is the strongest kind of curiosity in existence and I was already curious about Annette.

M. Grimaldi told Véronique that Rosalie wished her to stay with me till I left Genoa, and she was as much astonished at this as I was.

"Be kind enough to tell her," said I to the marquis, "that Véronique has anticipated her wishes and has got her sister Annette to stay with her."

"Two are always better than one, my dear fellow," replied the crafty Genoese.

After these remarks we left the two sisters together and went into my room, where he said:

"Your Rosalie is contented and you ought to congratulate yourself on having made her happy, as I am sure she will be. The only thing that vexes me is that you can't go and see her yourself with any propriety."

"You are in love with her, my lord."

"I confess I am, but I am an old man and that vexes me."

"That's no matter, she will love you tenderly; and, if Petri ever becomes her husband, I am sure she will never be anything more than a good friend to him. Write to me at Florence and tell me how she receives him."

"Stay here for another three days; the two beauties there will make the time seem short."

"It's exactly for that reason that I want to go to-morrow. I am afraid of Véronique."

"I shouldn't have thought that you would allow any woman to frighten you."

"I am afraid she has cast her fatal nets around me and, when the time comes, will be strictly moral. Rosalie is my only love."

"Well, here's a letter from her."

I went aside to read the letter, the sight of which made my heart beat violently; it ran as follows:

"Dearest,—I see you have placed me in the hands of one who will care for me like a father. This is a new kindness which I owe to the goodness of your heart. I will write to you at whatever address you send me. If you like Véronique, my darling, do not fear any jealousy from me; I should be wrong to entertain such a feeling in my present position. I expect that, if you make much of her, she will not be able to resist, and I shall be glad to hear that she is lessening your sadness. I hope you will write me a few lines before you go."

I went up to the marquis and told him to read it. He seemed greatly moved.

"Yes," said he, "the dear girl will find in me her friend and father, and, if she marries my godson and he does not treat her as he ought, he will not possess her long. I shall remember her in my will and thus, when I am dead, my care will still continue. But what do you think of the advice as to Véronique? I don't expect she is exactly a vestal virgin, though I have never heard anything against her."

I had ordered that the table be laid for four, so Annette sat down without our having to ask her. Le Duc appeared on the scene and I told him that, if he were ill, he might go to bed.

"I am quite well," said he.

"I am glad to hear it; but don't trouble now, you shall wait on me when I am at Leghorn."

I saw that Véronique was delighted at my sending him away and I resolved then and there to lay siege to her heart. I began by talking to her in a very meaning manner all supper-time, while the marquis

entertained Annette. I asked him if he thought I could get a felucca next day to take me to Lerici.

"Yes," said he, "whenever you like and with as many oarsmen as you please; but I hope you will put off your departure for two or three days."

"No," I replied, ogling Véronique, "the delay might cost me too dear."

The sly puss answered with a smile that showed she understood my meaning.

When we rose from the table, I amused myself with Annette and the marquis with Véronique. After a quarter of an hour he came and said to me, "Certain persons have asked me to beg you to stay a few days longer, or at least to sup here to-morrow night."

"Very good. We will talk of the few days more at supper to-morrow."

"Victory!" said the marquis, and Véronique seemed very grateful to me for granting her request. When our guest was gone, I asked my new housekeeper if I might send Costa to bed.

"As my sister is with me, there can be no ground for any suspicion."

"I am delighted that you consent: now I am going to talk to you."

She proceeded to do my hair but made no answer to my soft speeches. When I was on the point of getting into bed, she wished me good night and I tried to kiss her by way of return. She repulsed me and ran to the door, much to my surprise. She was going to leave the room when I addressed her in a voice of grave politeness.

"I beg you will stay; I want to speak to you; come and sit by me. Why should you refuse me a pleasure which, after all, is a mere mark of friendship?"

"Because, things being as they are, we could not remain friends, neither could we be lovers."

"Lovers! Why not? We are perfectly free."

"I am not free; I am bound by certain prejudices which do not trouble you."

"I should have thought you were superior to prejudices."

"There are some prejudices which a woman ought to respect. The 'superiority' you mention is a pitiful thing, always the dupe of itself. What would become of me, I should like to know, if I abandoned myself to the feelings I have for you?"

"I was waiting for you to say that, dear Véronique. What you feel for me is not love. If it were so, you would feel as I do and you would soon break the bonds of prejudice."

"I confess that my head is not quite turned yet, but still I feel that I shall grieve at your departure."

"If so, that is no fault of mine. But tell me what I can do for you during my short stay here."

"Nothing; we do not know one another well enough."

"I understand you, but I would have you know that I do not intend to marry any woman who has not first been my sweetheart."

"You mean you will not marry her till you have ceased to be her lover?"

"Exactly."

"You would like to finish where I would begin."

"You may be happy some day, but you play for high stakes."

"Well, it's a case of win all or lose all."

"That's as it may be. But, without further argument, it seems to me that we could safely enjoy our love and pass many happy moments undisturbed by prejudice."

"Possibly, but one gets burnt fingers at that game and I shudder at the very thought of it. Oh, no! leave me alone; see, my sister is taking fright to see me in your arms."

"Very well; I see I was mistaken, and Rosalie too."

"Why, what did she think about me?"

"She wrote and told me that she thought you would be kind."

"I hope she mayn't have to repent for having been too kind herself."

"Goodbye, Véronique."

I felt vexed at having made the attempt, for in these matters one always feels angry at failure. I decided I would leave her and her precepts, true or false, alone; but, when I awoke in the morning and saw her coming to my bed with a pleasant smile on her face, I suddenly changed my mind. I had slept off my anger and was in love again. I thought she had repented and that I should be victorious when I attacked her again. I put on a smile myself and breakfasted gaily with her and her sister. I behaved in the same way at dinner; and the general high spirits which M. Grimaldi found prevailing in the evening made him think, doubtless, that we were getting on well, and he congratulated us. Véronique behaved exactly as if the marquis had guessed the truth and I felt sure of having her after supper, and in the ecstasy of the thought I promised to stay for four days longer.

"Bravo, Véronique!" said the marquis, "that's the way! You are intended by nature to rule your lovers with an absolute sway."

I thought she would say something to diminish the marquis's certainty that there was an agreement between us, but she did nothing of the sort, seeming to enjoy her triumph, which made her appear more beautiful than ever; whilst I looked at her with the submissive gaze of a captive who glories in his chains. I took her behaviour as an omen of my approaching conquest and did not speak to M. Grimaldi alone, lest he might ask me questions which I should not care to answer. He told us before he went away that he was engaged on the morrow and so could not come to see us till the day after.

As soon as we were alone, Véronique said to me:

"You see how I let people believe what they please; I had rather be thought kind, as you call it, than ridiculous, as a virtuous girl is termed nowadays. Is it not so?"

"No, dear Véronique, I will never call you ridiculous, but I shall think you hate me if you make me pass another night in torture. You have inflamed me."

"Oh, pray be quiet! For pity's sake, leave me alone! I will not inflame you any more. Oh! Oh!"

I had enraged her by my too daring advances; she repulsed me and fled. Three or four minutes later her sister came to undress me. I told her gently to go to bed, as I had to write for three or four hours; but, not caring that she should come on a bootless errand, I opened a box and gave her a watch. She took it modestly, saying, "This is for my sister, I suppose?"

"No, dear Annette, it's for you."

She gave a skip of delight and I could not prevent her kissing my hand.

I proceeded to write Rosalie a letter of four pages. I felt worried and displeased with myself and everyone else. I tore up my letter without reading it over and, making an effort to calm myself, wrote her another more subdued than the first, in which I said nothing of Véronique, but informed my fair recluse that I was leaving on the day following.

I did not go to bed till very late, feeling out of temper with the world. I considered that I had failed in my duty to Véronique, whether she loved me or not, for I loved her and I was a man of honour. I had a bad night and, when I awoke it was noon and, on ringing, Costa and Annette appeared. The absence of Véronique showed how I had offended her. When Costa had left the room, I asked Annette after her sister and she said she was working. I wrote her a note in which I begged her pardon, promising that I would never offend her again and begging her to forget everything and be just the same as before. I was taking my coffee when she came into my room with a mortified air which grieved me excessively.

"Forget everything, I beg, and I will trouble you no more. Give me my buckles, as I am going for a country walk and I shall not be in till supper-time. I shall doubtless get an excellent appetite and, as you have nothing more to fear, you need not trouble to send me Annette again."

I dressed in haste and left the town by the first road that came in my way, and I walked fast for two hours, with the intention of tiring myself and thus readjusting the balance between mind and body. I have always found that severe exercise and fresh air are the best cure for any mental perturbation.

I had walked for more than three leagues when hunger and weariness made me stop at a village inn, where I had an omelette cooked. I ate it hungrily with brown bread and wine which seemed to me delicious, though it was rather sharp.

I felt too tired to walk back to Genoa, so I asked for a carriage, but there was no such thing to be had. The innkeeper provided me with a sorry nag and a man to guide me. Darkness was coming on and we had more than six miles to do. Fine rain began to fall when I started and continued all the way, so that I got home by eight o'clock wet to the skin, shivering with cold, dead tired and in a sore plight from the

rough saddle, against which my satin breeches were no protection. Costa helped me to change my clothes and, as he went out, Annette came in.

"Where is your sister?"

"She is in bed with a bad headache. She gave me a letter for you, here it is."

"I have been obliged to go to bed on account of a severe headache to which I am subject. I feel better already and shall be able to wait on you to-morrow. I tell you this because I do not wish you to think that my illness is feigned. I am sure that your repentance for having humiliated me is sincere and I hope that you will in your turn forgive me or pity me if my way of thinking prevents me from conforming to yours."

"Annette, dear, go and ask your sister if she would like us to sup in her room."

She soon came back, telling me that Véronique was obliged but begged me to let her sleep.

I supped with Annette and was glad to see that, though she drank only water, her appetite was better than mine. My passion for her sister prevented me thinking of her, but I felt that Annette would otherwise have taken my fancy. When we were taking dessert, I conceived the idea of making the girl drunk, to get her to talk of her sister, so I gave her a glass of Lunel muscat.

"I drink only water, sir."

"Don't you like wine?"

"Yes, but, as I am not used to it, I am afraid of its going to my head."

"Then you can go to bed; you will sleep all the better."

She drank the first glass, which she enjoyed immensely, then a second and a third. Her little brains were in some confusion when she had finished the third glass. I made her talk about her sister and in perfect good faith she told me all the good imaginable.

"Then you are very fond of Véronique?" said I.

"Oh, yes! I love her with all my heart, but she will not let me caress her."

"No doubt she is afraid of your ceasing to love her. But do you think she ought to make me suffer so?"

"No, but, if you love her, you ought to forgive her."

Annette was still quite reasonable. I made her drink a fourth glass of muscat, but an instant after she told me that she could not see anything and we rose from the table. Annette began to please me a little too much, but I determined not to make any attempts upon her, for fear of finding her too submissive. A little resistance sharpens the appetite, while favours granted with too much ease lose a great deal of their charm. Annette was only fourteen, she had a soft heart, no knowledge of the world or her own rights, and would not have resisted my embraces for fear of being rude. That sort of thing would please only a rich and voluptuous Turk.

I begged her to do my hair, intending to dismiss her directly after, but, when she had finished, I asked her to give me the ointment.

"What do you want it for?"

"For the blisters from that cursed saddle on which I rode six miles."

"Does the ointment do them good?"

"Certainly; it takes away the smart and by to-morrow I shall be cured, but you must send Costa to me, as I cannot put it on myself."

"Can't I do it?"

"Yes, but I am afraid that would be an abuse of your kindness."

"I guess why; but, as I am shortsighted, how shall I see the blisters?"

"If you want to do it for me, I will place myself so that it will be easier for you. Stay, put the candle on this table."

"There you are, but don't let Costa put it on to-morrow or he will guess that I or my sister did it to-night."

"You will do me the same service, then, to-morrow?"

"I or my sister, for she will get up early."

"Your sister! No, my dear; she would be afraid of giving me too much pleasure."

"And I am afraid only of hurting you. Am I doing it right? Good heavens! what a state your skin is in!"

"You have not finished yet."

"I am so shortsighted; turn round."

"With pleasure. Here I am."

The little wanton could not resist laughing over this operation which she, doubtless, performed for the first time. She was obliged to continue rubbing the ointment in and I saw that she liked it, as she went on until I was not able to stand it any longer.

When she had finished, I burst out laughing to hear her ask, in the most serious way, the pot of ointment still in her left hand, "Did I do that right?"

"Oh, admirably, dear Annette! You are an angel and I am sure you know what pleasure you gave me. Can you come and spend an hour with me?"

"Wait a bit."

She went out and shut the door and I waited for her to return; but, my patience being exhausted, I opened the door slightly and saw her undressing and getting into bed with her sister. I went back to my room and to bed again, without losing all hope. I was not disappointed, for in five minutes back she came, clad in her chemise and walking on tiptoe.

"Come to my arms, my love; it is very cold."

"Here I am. My sister is asleep and suspects nothing; and, even if she awoke, the bed is so wide that she would not notice my absence."

"You are a divine creature and I love you with all my heart."

"So much the better. I give myself up to you; do what you like with me, on the condition that you think of my sister no more."

"That will not cost me much. I promise I will not think of her."

I found Annette a perfect neophyte, and I spent two hours of delight

with this pretty baby—for she was so small, so delicate and so daintily shaped all over, that I can find no better name for her. Her docility did not detract from the piquancy of the pleasure, for she was voluptuously inclined.

When I rose in the morning, she came to my room with Véronique, and I was glad to see that, while the younger sister was radiant with happiness, the elder looked pleasant and as if she desired to make herself agreeable. I asked her how she was and she told me that diet and sleep had completely cured her. "I have always found them the best remedy for a headache." Annette had also completely cured me of the curiosity I had felt about her. I congratulated myself on my achievement.

I was in such high spirits at supper that M. Grimaldi thought I had won everything from Véronique, and I let him think so. I promised to dine with him the next day and I kept my word. After dinner I gave him a long letter for Rosalie, whom I did not expect to see again except as Madame Petri, though I took care not to let the marquis know what I thought.

In the evening I supped with the two sisters and made myself equally agreeable to both of them. When Véronique was alone with me, putting my hair into curl papers, she said that she loved me much more, now that I behaved discreetly.

"My discretion," I replied, "means only that I have given up the hope of winning you. I have accepted the situation."

"Your love was not very great, then?"

"It sprang up quickly and you, Véronique, could have made it increase to gigantic size."

She said nothing but bit her lip, wished me "good night" and left the room. I went to bed expecting a visit from Annette, but I waited in vain. When I rang the next morning, the dear girl appeared looking rather sad. I asked her the reason.

"Because my sister is ill and spent the whole night writing," said she.

Thus I learnt the reason of her not having paid me a visit.

"Do you know what she was writing about?"

"Oh, no! She does not tell me that kind of thing, but here is a letter for you."

I read through the long and well composed letter, but, as it bore marks of craft and dissimulation, it made me laugh. After several remarks of no consequence she said that she had repulsed me because she loved me so much and feared that, if she satisfied my fancy, she might lose me.

"I will be wholly yours," she added, "if you will give me the position which Rosalie enjoyed. I will travel in your company, but you must give me a document, which M. Grimaldi will sign as a witness, in which you must engage to marry me in a year and give me a portion of fifty thousand francs; and if, at the end of a year, you do not wish to marry me, that sum to be at my absolute disposal."

She stipulated also that, if she became a mother in the course of a year, the child should be hers in the event of our separating. On these conditions she would become my mistress and would have for me all possible love and kindness.

This proposal, cleverly conceived but foolishly communicated to me, showed me that Véronique had not the talent of duping others. I saw directly that M. Grimaldi had nothing to do with it and I felt sure that he would laugh when I told him the story.

Annette soon came back with the chocolate and told me that her sister hoped I would answer her letter.

"Yes, dear," said I, "I will answer her when I get up."

I took my chocolate, put on my dressing-gown and went to Véronique's room. I found her sitting up in bed in an easy-going attire that might have attracted me if her letter had not deprived her of my good opinion. I sat on the bed, gave her back the letter, and said, "Why write, when we can talk the matter over?"

"Because one is often more at ease in writing than in speaking."

"In diplomacy and business that will pass, but not in love. Love makes no conditions. Let us have no documents, no safeguards, but give yourself up to me as Rosalie did and begin to-night without my promising anything. If you trust in love, you will make him your prisoner. That way will honour us and our pleasures and, if you like, I will consult M. Grimaldi on the subject. As to your plan, if it does not injure your honour, it does small justice to your common sense and no one but a fool would agree to it. You could not possibly love the man to whom you make such a proposal and, as to M. Grimaldi, far from having anything to do with it, I am sure he would be indignant at the very idea."

This discourse did not put Véronique out of countenance. She said she did not love me well enough to give herself to me unconditionally, to which I replied that I was not sufficiently taken with her charms to buy them at the price she fixed, and so I left her.

I called Costa, and told him to go and warn the master of the felucca that I was going the next day, and with this idea I went to bid goodbye to the marquis, who informed me that he had just been taking Petri to see Rosalie, who had received him well. I told him I was glad to hear it and commended to him the care of her happiness, but such recommendations were superfluous.

It is one of the most curious circumstances of my history that in one year two women whom I sincerely loved and whom I might have married were taken from me by two old men whose affections I had fostered without wishing to do so. Happily these gentlemen made my mistresses' fortunes, but on the other hand they did me a still greater service in relieving me of a tie which I should have found very troublesome in course of time. No doubt they both saw that my fortune, though great in outward show, rested on no solid basis, which, as the reader will see, was unhappily only too true. I should be glad if I

thought that my mistakes, or rather my follies, would serve as a warning to the readers of these *Memoirs*.

I spent the day in watching the care with which Véronique and Annette packed my trunks, for I would not let my two servants help in any way. Véronique was neither sad nor gay. She looked as if she had made up her mind and as if there had never been any differences between us. I was very glad, for, as I no longer cared for her, I should have been annoyed to find that she still cared for me.

We supped in our usual manner, discussing only commonplace topics, but, just as I was going to bed, Annette shook my hand in a way that told me to prepare for a visit from her. I admired the natural shrewdness of young girls, who take their degrees in the art of love with so much ease and at such an early age. Annette, almost a child, knew more than a young man of twenty. I decided on giving her fifty sequins without letting Véronique see me, as I did not intend to be so liberal towards her. I took a roll of ducats and gave them to her as soon as she came.

She lay down beside me and, after a short moment devoted to love, she said that Véronique was asleep, adding, "I heard all you said to my sister and I am sure you love her."

"If I did, dear Annette, I should not have made my proposal in such plain terms."

"I should like to believe that, but what would you have done if she had accepted your offer? Would you have sealed the agreement then and there?"

"I was more than certain, dearest, that her pride would hinder her receiving me."

We had reached this point in our conversation when we were surprised by the sudden appearance of Véronique with a lighted candle and wearing only her chemise. She laughed at her sister to encourage her and I joined in the laughter, keeping a firm hold on the little one for fear of her escaping. Véronique looked ravishing in her scanty attire and, as she was laughing, I could not be angry with her. However, I said, "You have interrupted our enjoyment and hurt your sister's feelings; perhaps you will despise her hereafter?"

"On the contrary, I shall always love her."

"Her feelings overcame her and she surrendered to me without making any terms."

"She has more sense than I."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do, really."

"I am astonished and delighted to hear it; but, as it is so, kiss your sister."

At this invitation Véronique put down the candle and covered Annette's beautiful body with kisses. The scene made me feel very happy.

"Come, Véronique," said I, "you will die of cold; come and lie down."

I made room for her and soon there were three of us under the same sheet. I was in an ecstasy at this group, worthy of Aretino's brush.

"Dearest ones," said I, "you have played me a pretty trick; was it premeditated? And was Véronique false this morning or is she false now?"

"We did not premeditate anything. I was true this morning and I am true now. I feel that I and my plan were very silly and I hope you will forgive me, since I have repented and have had my punishment. Now I think I am in my right senses, as I have yielded to the feelings with which you inspired me when I saw you first and against which I have fought too long."

"What you say pleases me extremely."

"Well, forgive me and finish my punishment by showing that you are not angry with me."

"How am I to do that?"

"By telling me that you are vexed no longer and by continuing to give my sister proofs of your love."

"I swear to you that, so far from being angry with you, I am very fond of you."

"That would be all very well," said Véronique, with some vexation in her manner, "if you were not leaving to-morrow morning."

"I will stay, dear Véronique, if only to prove how much I love you."

"And to let me prove that I love you."

I could not have wished for plainer speech on her part, and I should have liked to show her my gratitude, but that would have been at Annette's expense and I felt I had no right to make any alteration in the play of which she was the author and had a right to expect all the profits. Whenever I recall this pleasant scene, I feel my heart beat with voluptuous pleasure and even now, with the hand of old age upon me, I cannot recall it without delight.

Véronique resigned herself to the part which her younger sister imposed on her and, turning aside, she leant her head on her hand. . . .

Such, at all events, were my thoughts, but the fates determined otherwise, for Costa came knocking loudly at my door, calling out that the felucca was ready. I was vexed at this untoward incident, got up in a rage and, after telling him to pay the master for the day, as I was not going till the morrow, I went back to bed. My two sweethearts were delighted with me, but we all needed rest, though the play should not have ended on an interruption. Annette, who was young and tired out, forgot her part and yielded to sleep as she had yielded to love. Véronique began to laugh when she saw her asleep, and I had to do the same when I saw she was as still as a corpse.

"What a pity!" said Véronique's eyes; but she said it with her eyes alone, while I was waiting for those words to issue from her lips. We were both of us wrong, she for not speaking, and I for waiting for her to speak. It was a favourable moment, but we let it pass by and love

punished us. Véronique went to her own bed and I stayed in bed with my sleeping beauty till noon, when I wished her good morning in much the same way as I had bade her good night.

The day was spent in talking about ourselves and, determined to eat only one meal, we did not sit down to table till night began to fall. We spent two hours in the consumption of delicate dishes and in defying Bacchus to make us feel his power. We rose as we saw Annette falling asleep, but we were not much annoyed at the thought that she would not see the pleasures we promised each other. I thought that I should have enough to do to contemplate the charms of the one nymph without looking at Annette's beauties. We went to bed, our arms interlaced, our bodies tight together and lip pressed on lip, but that was all. . . . I had never had such a misfortune, unless as the result of complete exhaustion or from a strong mental impression capable of destroying my natural faculties. Let my readers imagine what I suffered. I was in despair; one cannot offer a greater insult to a woman.

At last we had to accept the facts and talk reasonably and I was the first to bewail my misfortune.

"You tired yourself too much yesterday," said she, "and you were not sufficiently temperate at supper. Do not let it trouble you, dearest; I am sure you love me."

Throughout that terrible and sleepless night my mind roamed abroad and, amidst the reproaches with which I overwhelmed myself, I found a certain satisfaction in the thought that they were not wholly undeserved. This is the sole enjoyment I still have when I meditate on my past life and its varied adventures. I feel that no misfortune has befallen me save by my own fault, whilst I attribute to natural causes the blessings, of which I have enjoyed many. I think I should go mad if in my soliloquies I came across any misfortune which I could not trace to my own fault, for I should not know where to place the reason and that would degrade me to the rank of creatures governed by instinct alone. I feel that I am somewhat more than a beast. A beast, in truth, is a foolish neighbour of mine who tries to argue that the brutes reason better than we do.

"I will grant," I said, "that they reason better than you, but I can go no further, and I think every reasonable man would say as much."

This reply made me an enemy, although he admits the first part of the thesis.

More fortunate than I, Véronique slept for three hours, but she was disagreeably surprised on my telling her that I had not been able to close an eye and on finding me in the same state as before. She began to get angry when I tried to convince her rather too forcibly that my misfortune was not due to want of will, and then she blamed herself as the cause and, mortified by this idea, endeavoured to destroy the spell by all the means which passion suggested and which I had hitherto thought infallible; but her efforts and mine were thrown away. My despair was as great as hers when at last, wearied, ashamed and de-

graded in her own eyes, she discontinued her efforts, her eyes full of tears. She went away without a word and left me alone for the two or three hours which had still to elapse before dawn appeared.

At daybreak Costa came and told me that, the sea being rough and a contrary wind blowing, the felucca would be in danger of perishing.

"We will go as soon as the weather improves," said I. "In the meantime light me a fire."

I arose and proceeded to write down the sad story of the night. This occupation soothed me and, feeling inclined to sleep, I lay down again and slept for eight hours. When I awoke, I felt better but still rather sad. The two sisters were delighted to see me in good health, but I thought I saw on Véronique's features an unpleasant expression of contempt. However, I had deserved it and I did not take the trouble of changing her opinion, though, if she had been more caressing, she might easily have put me in a way to repair the involuntary wrongs I had done her in the night. Before we sat down to table, I gave her a present of a hundred sequins, which made her look a little more cheerful. I gave an equal present to my dear Annette, who had not expected anything, thinking herself amply recompensed by my first gift and by the pleasure I had afforded her.

At midnight the master of the felucca came to tell me that the wind had changed and I took leave of the sisters. Véronique shed tears, but I knew to what to attribute them; Annette kissed me affectionately; thus each played her own part. I sailed for Lerici, where I arrived the next day, and then posted to Leghorn. Before I speak of this town, I think I shall interest my readers by narrating a circumstance not unworthy of these *Memoirs*.

CHAPTER 82

I WAS standing at some distance from my carriage, into which they were putting four horses, when a man accosted me and asked if I would pay in advance or at the next stage. Without troubling to look at him, I said I would pay in advance and gave him a coin, requesting him to bring me the change.

"Directly, sir," said he, and with that he went into the inn.

A few minutes after, just as I was going to look after my change, the postmaster came up and asked me to pay for the stage.

"I have already paid and am waiting for my change. Did I not give the money to you?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Whom did I give it to, then?"

"I really can't say; but you will be able to recognise the man, doubtless."

"It must have been you or one of your people."

I was speaking loud and all the men came about me.

"These are all the men in my employ," said the master, and he asked if any of them had received the money from me.

They all denied the fact with an air of sincerity which left no room for suspicion. I cursed and swore, but they let me curse and swear as much as I liked. At last I discovered that there was no help for it, and I paid a second time, laughing at the clever rascal who had taken me in so thoroughly. Such are the lessons of life—always full of new experiences, and yet one never knows enough. From that day I have always taken care not to pay for posting except to the proper persons.

In no country are knaves so cunning as in Italy, Greece ancient and modern, excepted.

• When I got to the best inn at Leghorn, they told me that there was a theatre and my luck led me to go and see the play. I was recognised by an actor who accosted me and introduced me to one of his comrades, a self-styled poet and a great enemy of the Abbé Chiari, whom I did not like, as he had written a biting satire against me and I had never succeeded in avenging myself on him. I asked them to come and sup with me, a windfall which these people are not given to refusing. The pretended poet was a Genoese and called himself Giacomo Passano. He informed me that he had written three hundred sonnets against the abbé, who would burst with rage if they were ever printed. As I could not restrain a smile at the good opinion the poet had of his works, he offered to read me a few sonnets. He had the manuscript about him and I could not escape the penance. He read a dozen or so, which I thought mediocre, and a mediocre sonnet is necessarily a bad sonnet, as this form of poetry demands sublimity; and thus, amongst the myriads of sonnets to which Italy gives birth, very few can be called good.

If I had given myself time to examine the man's features, I should, no doubt, have found him to be a rogue; but I was blinded by passion and the idea of three hundred sonnets against the Abbé Chiari fascinated me.

I cast my eyes over the title of the manuscript and read *La Chiareide di Ascanio Pogomas*.

"That's an anagram of my Christian name and my surname. Is it not a happy combination?"

This folly made me smile again. Each of the sonnets was a dull diatribe ending with, "L'abbate Chiari è un coglione." He did not prove that he was one, but he said so over and over again, making use of the poet's privilege to exaggerate and lie. What he wanted to do was to annoy the abbé, who was by no means what Passano called him but, on the contrary, a wit and a poet; and, if he had been acquainted with the requirements of the stage, he would have written better plays than Goldoni, as he had a greater command of language.

I told Passano, for civility's sake, that he ought to get his *Chiareide* printed.

"I would do so," said he, "if I could find a publisher, for I am not rich enough to pay the expenses myself and the publishers are a pack

of ignorant beggars. Besides, the press is not free and the censor would not let the epithet I give to my hero pass. If I could go to Switzerland, I am sure it could be managed; but I must have six sequins to walk to Switzerland and I have not got them."

"And when you got to Switzerland, where there are no theatres, what would you do for a living?"

"I would paint miniatures. Look at these."

He gave me a number of small ivory tablets, representing obscene subjects, badly drawn and badly painted.

"I will give you an introduction to a gentleman at Berne," I said, and after supper I gave him a letter and six sequins. He wanted to force some of his productions on me, but I would not have them. I was foolish enough to give him a letter to pretty Sara's father and I told him to write to me at Rome, in care of the banker Belloni.

I set out from Leghorn the next day and went to Pisa, where I stopped two days. There I made the acquaintance of an Englishman, of whom I bought a travelling carriage. He took me to see Corilla, the celebrated poetess. She received me with great politeness and was kind enough to improvise on several subjects which I suggested. I was enchanted, not so much with her grace and beauty as by her wit and perfect elocution. How sweet a language sounds when it is spoken well and the expressions are well chosen! A language badly spoken is intolerable even from a pretty mouth and I have always admired the wisdom of the Greeks who made their nurses teach the children from the cradle to speak correctly and pleasantly. We are far from following their good example; witness the fearful accents one hears in what is called, often incorrectly, "good society."

Corilla was *straba*, like Venus as painted by the ancients—why, I cannot think, for, however fair a squint-eyed woman may be otherwise, I always look upon her face as distorted. I am sure that, if Venus had been in truth a goddess, she would have made the eccentric Greek who first dared to paint her cross-eyed feel the weight of her anger. I was told that, when Corilla sang, she had only to fix her squinting eyes on a man and the conquest was complete; but, praised be God! she did not fix them on me.

In Florence I lodged at the Hotel Carrajo, kept by Dr. Vannini, who delighted to confess himself an unworthy member of the Accademia della Crusca. I took a suite of rooms which looked out on the bank of the Arno. I also took a carriage and a footman, whom, as well as a coachman, I clad in blue and red livery. This was M. de Bragadin's livery and I thought I might use his colours, not with the intention of deceiving anyone, but merely to cut a dash.

The morning after my arrival I put on my greatcoat to escape observation and proceeded to walk about Florence. In the evening I went to the theatre to see the famous harlequin, Roffi, but I considered his reputation was greater than he deserved. I passed the same judgment on the boasted Florentine elocution; I did not care for it at all. I en-

joyed seeing Pertici; having become old and not being able to sing any more, he acted and, strange to say, acted well; for, as a rule, all singers, men and women, trust to their voice and care nothing for acting, so that an ordinary cold entirely disables them for the time being.

Next day I called on the banker, Sasso Sassi, on whom I had a good letter of credit, and after an excellent dinner I dressed and went to the opera, *in via della Pergola*, taking a stage box, not so much for the music, of which I was never much of an admirer, as because I wanted to look at the actress.

The reader may guess my delight and surprise when I recognised in the prima donna Thérèse, the false Bellino, whom I had left at Rimini in the year 1744, that charming Thérèse whom I should certainly have married if M. de Gages had not put me under arrest. I had not seen her for seventeen years, but she looked as beautiful and ravishing as ever as she came forward on the stage. It seemed impossible, I could not believe my eyes, thinking the resemblance must be a coincidence, when, after singing an air, she fixed her eyes on mine and kept them there. I could no longer doubt that it was she; she plainly recognised me. As she left the stage, she stopped in the wings and made a sign to me with her fan to come and speak to her.

I went out with a beating heart, though I could not explain my perturbation, for I did not feel guilty in any way towards Thérèse, save in that I had not answered the last letter she had written from Naples, thirteen years before. I went round the theatre, feeling a greater curiosity as to the results of our interview than to know what had befallen her during the seventeen years which seemed an age to me.

I came to the stage door and saw Thérèse standing at the top of the stair. She told the doorkeeper to let me pass; I went up and we stood face to face. Dumb with surprise, I took her hand and pressed it against my heart.

"Know from that beating heart," said I, "all that I feel."

"I can't follow your example here," said she, "but, when I saw you, I thought I should faint. Unfortunately I am engaged for supper. I shall not shut my eyes all night. I shall expect you at eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Where are you staying?"

"At Dr. Vannini's."

"Under what name?"

"My own."

"How long have you been here?"

"Since yesterday."

"Are you stopping long in Florence?"

"As long as you like."

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Cursed be that supper! What an event! You must leave me now, I have to go on. Goodbye till seven o'clock to-morrow."

She had said "eight" at first, but an hour sooner was no harm. I

returned to the theatre and recollected that I had asked neither her name nor address, but I could find out all that easily. She was playing Mandane and her singing and acting were admirable. I asked a well dressed young man beside me what that admirable actress's name was.

"You have only to-day come to Florence, sir?"

"I arrived yesterday."

"Ah, well, then it's excusable. That actress has the same name as I have. She is my wife and I am Cirillo Palesi, at your service."

I bowed and was silent with surprise. I dared not ask where she lived, lest he might think my curiosity impertinent. Thérèse married to this handsome young man, of whom, of all others, I had made inquiries about her! It was like a scene in a play.

I could bear it no longer. I longed to be alone and ponder over this strange adventure at my ease and think about my visit to Thérèse at seven o'clock the next morning. I felt the most intense curiosity to see what the husband would do when he recognised me, and he was certain to do so, for he had looked at me attentively as he spoke. I felt that my old flame for Thérèse was rekindled in my heart and I did not know whether I was glad or sorry at her being married. I left the opera house and told my footman to call my carriage.

"You can't have it till nine o'clock, sir; it was so cold, the coachman sent the horses back to the stable."

"We will return on foot, then."

"You will catch a cold."

"What is the prima donna's name?"

"When she came here, she called herself Lanti, but for the last two months she has been Madame Palesi. She married a handsome young man with no property and no profession, but she is rich, so he takes his ease and does nothing."

"Where does she live?"

"At the end of this street. There's her house, sir; she lodges on the first floor."

This was all I wanted to know, so I said no more but took note of the various turnings, that I might be able to find my way alone the next day. I ate a light supper and told Le Duc to call me at six o'clock.

"But it is not light till seven."

"I know that."

"Very good."

At the dawn of day I was at the door of the woman I had loved so passionately. I went to the first floor, rang the bell and an old woman came out and asked me if I were M. Casanova. I told her that I was, whereupon she said that the lady had informed her I was not coming till eight.

"She said 'seven'."

"Well, well, it's of no consequence. Kindly walk in here. I will go and wake her."

In five minutes the young husband in his nightcap and dressing-gown came in and said that his wife would not be long. Then, looking at me attentively with an astounded stare, he said, "Are you not the gentleman who asked me my wife's name last night?"

"You are right, I did. I have not seen your wife for many years, but I thought I recognised her. My good fortune made me inquire of her husband and the friendship which formerly attached me to her will henceforth attach me to you."

As I uttered this pretty compliment, Thérèse, fair as Venus, rushed into the room with open arms. I took her to my bosom in a transport of delight and thus we remained for two minutes, two friends, two lovers, happy to see one another after a long and sad separation. We kissed each other again and again and then, bidding her husband sit down, she drew me to a couch and gave full course to her tears. I wept, too, and my tears were happy ones. At last we wiped our eyes and glanced towards the husband, whom we had completely forgotten. He stood in an attitude of complete astonishment and we burst out laughing. There was something so comic in his surprise that it would have taxed all the talents of the poet and the caricaturist to depict his expression of amazement. Thérèse, who knew how to manage him, cried in a pathetic and affectionate voice:

"My dear Palesi, you see before you my father—nay, more than a father, for this is my generous friend to whom I owe all. Oh, happy moment! for which my heart has longed these ten years past."

At the word "father" the unhappy husband fixed his gaze on me, but I restrained my laughter with considerable difficulty. Although Thérèse was young for her age, she was only two years younger than I; but friendship gives a special meaning to the sweet name of "father."

"Yes, sir," said I, "your Thérèse is my daughter, my sister, my cherished friend; she is an angel, and this treasure is your wife."

"I did not reply to your last letter," said I, not giving him time to come to himself.

"I know all," she replied. "You fell in love with a nun. You were imprisoned under The Leads and I heard of your almost miraculous flight in Vienna. I had a false presentiment that I should see you in that town. Afterwards I heard of you in Paris and Holland, but, after you left Paris, nobody could tell me any more about you. You will hear some fine tales when I tell you all that has happened to me during the past ten years. Now I am happy. I have my dear Palesi here, who comes from Rome. I married him a couple of months ago. We are very fond of each other and I hope you will be as much his friend as mine."

At this, I arose and embraced the husband, who cut such an extraordinary figure. He met me with open arms, but in some embarrassment; he was, no doubt, not yet quite satisfied as to the individual who was his wife's father, brother, friend and perhaps lover, all at once. Thérèse saw this feeling in his eyes and came and kissed him after me most affectionately, which embarrassed me in my turn, for I felt all my

"I swear to you, you don't look even as old as that, but in Naples . . ."

"In Naples some people might be able to contradict me, but nobody would mind them. But I am waiting for what should be the sweetest moment of your life."

"What is that, pray?"

"Allow me to keep my own counsel; I want to enjoy your surprise. How are you off? If you want money, I can give back all you gave me, and with compound interest. All I have belongs to me; my husband is not master of anything. I have fifty thousand ducats in Naples, and an equal sum in diamonds. Tell me how much you want—quick! the chocolate is coming."

Such a woman was Thérèse. I was deeply moved and was about to throw my arms about her neck without answering when the chocolate came. Her husband was followed by a girl of exquisite beauty, who carried three cups of chocolate on a silver-gilt dish. While we drank it, Palesi amused us by telling us with much humour how surprised he was when he recognised the man who made him rise at such an early hour as the same who had asked him his wife's name the night before. Thérèse and I laughed till our sides ached, the story was told so wittily and pleasantly. This Roman displeased me less than I had expected; his jealousy seemed put on only for form's sake.

"At ten o'clock," said Thérèse, "I have a rehearsal here of the new opera. You can stay and listen if you like. I hope you will dine with us every day and it will give me great pleasure if you will look upon my house as yours."

"To-day," said I, "I will stay with you till after supper and then I will leave you with your fortunate husband."

As I pronounced these words, M. Palesi embraced me with effusion, as if to thank me for not objecting to his enjoying his rights as a husband.

He was between the ages of twenty and twenty-two, of a fair complexion and well built, but too pretty for a man. I did not wonder at Thérèse being in love with him, for I knew too well the power of a handsome face; but I thought that she had made a mistake in marrying, for a husband acquires certain rights which may become troublesome.

Thérèse's pretty maid came to tell me that my carriage was at the door.

"Will you allow me," said I to Thérèse, "to have my footman in?"

"Rascal," said I, as soon as he came in, "who told you to come here with my carriage?"

"Nobody, sir, but I know my duty."

"Who told you I was here?"

"I guessed as much."

"Go and fetch Le Duc and come back with him."

When they arrived, I told Le Duc to pay the impertinent fellow

three days' wages, strip him of his livery and ask Dr. Vannini to get me a servant of the same height, not gifted with the faculty of divination, but who knew how to obey his master's orders. The rascal was much perturbed at the result of his officiousness and asked Thérèse to plead for him; but, like a sensible woman, she told him that his master was the best judge of the value of his services.

At ten o'clock all the actors and actresses arrived, bringing with them a mob of amateurs who crowded the hall. Thérèse received their greetings graciously and I could see she enjoyed a great reputation. The rehearsal lasted three hours and wearied me extremely. To relieve my boredom, I talked to Palesi, whom I liked for not asking me any particulars of my acquaintance with his wife. I saw that he knew how to behave in the position in which he was placed.

A girl from Parma, named Redegonde, who played a man's part and sang very well, stayed to dinner. Thérèse had also asked a young Bolognese woman, named Corticelli. I was struck with the budding charms of this pretty dancer but, as I was just then full of Thérèse, did not pay much attention to her. Soon after we sat down, I saw a plump abbé coming in with measured steps. He looked to me a regular Tartuffe, after nothing but Thérèse. He came up to her as soon as he saw her and, going on one knee in the Portuguese fashion, kissed her hand tenderly and respectfully. Thérèse received him with smiling courtesy and put him at her right hand. I was at her left. His voice, manner and all about him told me I had known him and in fact I soon recognised him as the Abbé Gama, whom I had left in Rome seventeen years before with Cardinal Acquaviva; but I pretended not to recognise him and indeed he had aged greatly. This gallant priest had eyes for no one but Thérèse and he was too busy with saying a thousand soft nothings to her to take notice of anybody else in the company. I hoped that in his turn he would either not recognise me or pretend not to do so, so I was continuing my trifling talk with the Corticelli when Thérèse told me that the abbé wanted to know whether I did not recollect him. I looked at his face attentively and with the air of a man who is trying to recollect something and then I rose and asked if he were not the Abbé Gama with whose acquaintance I had been honoured.

"The same," said he, rising, and, placing his arms round my neck, he kissed me again and again. This was in perfect agreement with his crafty character; the reader will not have forgotten the portrait of him contained in the first volume of these *Memoirs*.

After the ice had been thus broken, it will be imagined that we had a long conversation. He spoke of Barbaruccia, of the fair Marchioness G—, of Cardinal S— C—, and told me how he had passed from the Spanish to the Portuguese service, in which he still continued. I was enjoying his talk about numerous subjects which had interested me in my early youth when an unexpected sight absorbed all my thinking faculties. A young man of fifteen or sixteen, as well grown as Italians usually are at that age, came into the room, saluted the company with

easy grace and kissed Thérèse. I was the only person who did not know him, but I was not the only one who looked surprised. The daring Thérèse introduced him to me with perfect coolness with the words, "This is my brother."

I greeted him as warmly as I could, but my manner was slightly confused, as I had not had time to recover my composure. This so-called brother of Thérèse was my living image, though his complexion was rather clearer than mine. I saw at once that he was my son; nature had never been so indiscreet as in the amazing likeness between us. This, then, was the surprise of which Thérèse had spoken; she had devised the pleasure of seeing me at once astounded and delighted, for she knew that my heart would be touched at the thought of having left her such a pledge of our mutual love. I had not the slightest foreknowledge in the matter, for Thérèse had never alluded to her being with child in her letters. I thought, however, that she should not have brought about this meeting in the presence of others, for everyone has eyes in his head and anyone with eyes must have seen that the young man was either my son or my brother. I glanced at her, but she avoided meeting my eye, while the pretended brother was looking at me so attentively that he did not hear what was said to him. As to the others, they did nothing but look first at me and then at him and, if they came to the conclusion that he was my son, they were then obliged to suppose that I had been the lover of Thérèse's mother if she was really his sister, for, taking into consideration the age she looked and gave herself out to be, she could not possibly be his mother. It was equally impossible that I could be Thérèse's father, as I did not look any older than she did.

My son spoke the Neapolitan dialect perfectly, but he also spoke Italian very well, and in whatever he said I was glad to recognise taste, good sense and intelligence. He was well informed, though he had been brought up in Naples, and his manners were very distinguished. His mother made him sit between us at table.

"His favourite amusement," she said to me, "is music. You must hear him on the clavier and, though I am eight years older, I shall not be surprised if you pronounce him the better performer."

Only a woman's delicate instinct could have suggested this remark; men hardly ever approach women in this respect.

Whether from natural impulses or self-esteem, I rose from the table so delighted with my son that I embraced him with the utmost tenderness and was applauded by the company. I asked everybody to dine with me the next day and my invitation was joyfully accepted; but the Corticelli said, with the utmost simplicity, "May I come too?"

"Certainly; you too."

After dinner the Abbé Gama asked me to breakfast with him or to have him to breakfast the next morning, as he was longing for a good talk with me.

"Come and breakfast with me," said I. "I shall be delighted to see you."

When the guests had gone, Don Cesarino, as the pretended brother of Thérèse was called, asked me if I would take him for a drive. I kissed him and replied that my carriage was at his service and that he and his brother-in-law could drive in it, but that I had resolved not to leave his sister that day. Palesi seemed quite satisfied with the arrangement and they both went away.

When we were alone, I gave Thérèse an ardent embrace and congratulated her on having such a brother.

"My dear, he is the dear fruit of our love; he is your son. He makes me happy and is happy himself, and indeed he has everything to make him so."

"And I, too, am happy, dear Thérèse. You must have seen that I recognised him at once."

"But do you want to give him a brother? How ardent you are!"

"Remember, beloved one, that you have said that to-morrow we are to be friends and nothing more."

But the thought that it was for the last time was a bitter drop in the cup of happiness.

When we had regained our composure, Thérèse said:

"The duke who took me from Rimini brought up our child; as soon as I knew that I was pregnant, I confided my secret to him. No one knew of my delivery and the child was sent to nurse at Sorrento, and the duke had him baptised under the name of Cæsar Philip Lanti. He remained at Sorrento till he was nine and then he was boarded with a worthy man who superintended his education and taught him music. From his earliest childhood he has known me as his sister and you cannot think how happy I was when I saw him growing so like you. I have always considered him as a sure pledge of our final union. I was ever thinking what would happen when we met, for I knew that he would have the same influence over you as he has over me. I was sure you would marry me and make him legitimate."

"And you have rendered all this, which would have made me happy, an impossibility."

"The fates have so decided; let us say no more about it. On the death of the duke I left Naples, leaving Cesarino at the same boarding school, under the protection of the Prince de la Riccia, who has always looked upon him as a brother. Your son, though he does not know it, possesses the sum of twenty thousand ducats, of which I receive the interest, but you may imagine that I let him want for nothing. My only regret is that I cannot tell him I am his mother, as I think he would love me still more if he knew that he owed his being to me. You cannot think how glad I was to see your surprise to-day and to note how soon you got to love him."

"He is wonderfully like me."

"That delights me. People must think you were my mother's lover. My husband thinks our friendship is due to the connection between you and my mother. He told me yesterday that Cesarino might be my brother on the mother's side but not on my father's, as he had

seen his father in the theatre, but that he could not possibly be my father, too. If I have children by Palesi, all I have will go to them but, if not, Cesarino will be my heir. My property is well secured, even if the Prince de la Riccia were to die."

"Come," said she, drawing me in the direction of her bedroom.

She opened a large box which contained her jewels and diamonds and shares to the amount of fifty thousand ducats. Besides that she had a large amount of plate and her talents, which assured her the first place in all the Italian theatres.

"Do you know whether our dear Cesarino has been in love yet?" said I.

"I don't think so, but I fancy my pretty maid is in love with him. I shall keep my eyes open."

"You mustn't be too strict."

"No, but it isn't a good thing for a young man to engage too soon in that pleasure which makes one neglect everything else."

"Let me have him; I will teach him how to live."

"Ask all, but leave me my son. You must know that I never kiss him for fear of giving way to excessive emotion. I wish you knew how good and pure he is and how well he loves me; I could not refuse him anything. What will people say in Venice when they see Casanova again, who escaped from The Leads and has become twenty years younger?"

"You are going to Venice, then, for the Ascensa?"

"Yes, and you are going to Rome?"

"And to Naples, to see my friend the Duke de Matalone."

"I know him well. He has already had a son by the daughter of the Duke de Bovino, whom he married. She must be a charming woman to have made a man of him, for all Naples knew that he was impotent."

"Probably she only knew the secret of making him a father."

"Well, it is possible."

We spent the time in talking with interest on various topics till Cesarino and the husband came back. The dear child finished his conquest of me at supper; he had a merry random wit and all the Neapolitan vivacity. He sat down at the clavier and, after playing several pieces with the utmost skill, began to sing Neapolitan songs which made us all laugh. Thérèse looked only at him and me, but now and again she embraced her husband, saying that in love alone lies happiness.

I thought then, and I think now, that this day was one of the happiest I have ever spent.

CHAPTER 83

At nine o'clock the next morning the Abbé Gama was announced. The first thing he did was to shed tears of joy (as he said) at seeing me so well and prosperous after so many years. The reader will guess that the abbé addressed me in the most flattering terms, and perhaps he may

know that one may be clever, experienced in the ways of the world and even distrustful of flattery, but yet one's self-love, ever on the watch, listens to the flatterer and thinks him pleasant. This polite and pleasant abbé, who had become extremely crafty from having lived all his days amongst the high dignitaries at the court of the *Servus Servorum Dei* (the best school of strategy), was not altogether an ill-disposed man, but both his disposition and his profession conspired to make him inquisitive—in fine, such as I have depicted him in the first volume of these *Memoirs*. He wanted to hear my adventures and did not wait for me to ask him to tell his story. He told me at great length the various incidents in his life for the seventeen years since we had seen one another. He had left the service of the King of Spain for that of the King of Portugal, had been secretary of the embassy to the Commander Almada and had been obliged to leave Rome because the Pope Rezonico would not allow the King of Portugal to punish certain worthy Jesuit assassins, who had merely broken his arm, as it happened, but who had none the less meant to take his life. Thus Gama was staying in Italy, corresponding with Almada and the famous Carvalho, waiting for the dispute to be finished before returning to Rome. In point of fact this was the only substantial incident in the abbé's story, but he worked in so many episodes of no consequence that it lasted an hour. No doubt he wished me to show my gratitude by telling him all my adventures without reserve; but the upshot of it was that we both showed ourselves true diplomatists, he in lengthening his story, I in shortening mine, while I could not help feeling some enjoyment in baulking the curiosity of my cassocked friend.

"What are you going to do in Rome?" said he, indifferently.

"I am going to beg the Pope to use his influence in my favour with the State Inquisitors in Venice."

It was not the truth, but one lie is as good as another, and, if I had said I was going only for amusement's sake, he would not have believed me. To tell the truth to an unbelieving man is to prostitute, to murder it. He then begged me to enter into a correspondence with him and, as that bound me to nothing, I agreed.

"I can give you a mark of my friendship," said he, "by introducing you to the Marquis de Botta-Adamo, Governor of Tuscany; he is supposed to be a friend of the Regent."

I accepted his offer gratefully and he then began to sound me about Thérèse, but found my lips as tightly closed as the lid of a miser's coffer. I told him she was a child when I made the acquaintance of her family at Bologna and that the resemblance between her brother and myself was a mere accident, a freak of nature. He happened to catch sight of a well written manuscript on the table and asked me if that superb writing was my secretary's. Costa, who was present, answered in Spanish that he had written it. Gama overwhelmed him with compliments and begged me to send Costa to him to copy some letters. I guessed that he wanted to pump him about me and said that I needed his services all the day.

"Well, well," said the abbé, "another time will do." I gave him no answer. Such is the character of the curious.

I am not referring to that curiosity which depends on the occult sciences and endeavours to pry into the future, the daughter of ignorance and superstition, its victims are either foolish or ignorant. But the Abbé Gama was neither; he was naturally curious and his employment made him still more so, for he was paid to find out everything. He was a diplomatist; if he had been a little lower down in the social scale, he would have been treated as a spy.

He left me to pay some calls, promising to be back by dinner-time.

Dr. Vannini brought me another servant, of the same height as the first, and engaged that he should obey orders and guess nothing. I thanked the academician and innkeeper and ordered him to get me a sumptuous dinner.

The Corticelli was the first to arrive, bringing with her her brother, an effeminate-looking young man, who played the violin moderately well, and her mother, who informed me that she never allowed her daughter to dine out without herself and her son.

"Then you can take her back again this instant," said I, "or take this ducat to dine somewhere else, as I don't want your company or your son's."

She took the ducat, saying that she was sure she was leaving her daughter in good hands.

"You may be sure of that," said I, "so be off."

The daughter made such witty observations on the above dialogue that I could not help laughing and I began to be in love with her. She was only thirteen and was so small that she looked ten. She was well formed, lively, witty and fairer than is usual with Italian women, but to this day I cannot conceive how I fell in love with her.

The young wanton begged me to protect her against the manager of the opera, who was a Jew. In the agreement she had made with him he had engaged to let her dance a *pas de deux* in the second opera and he had not kept his word. She begged me to compel the Jew to fulfil his engagement and I promised to do so.

The next guest was Redegonde, who came from Parma. She was a tall, handsome woman and Costa told me she was the sister of my footman. After I had talked with her for two or three minutes, I found her remarks well worthy of attention.

Then came the Abbé Gama, who congratulated me on being seated between two pretty girls. I made him take my place and he began to entertain them as if to the manner born and, though the girls were laughing at him, he was not in the least disconcerted. He thought he was amusing them and, on watching his expression, I saw that his self-esteem prevented him seeing that he was making a fool of himself; but I did not guess that I might make the same mistake at his age.

Wretched is the old man who will not recognise old age—unless he learn that the sex whom he seduced so often when he was young will despise him now if he still attempts to gain their favour.

My fair Thérèse, with her husband and my son, was the last to arrive. I kissed Thérèse and then my son and sat down between them, whispering to Thérèse that such a dear, mysterious trinity must not be parted, at which Thérèse smiled sweetly. The abbé sat down between Redegonde and the Corticelli and amused us all the time by his agreeable conversation.

I laughed inwardly when I observed how respectfully my new footman changed his sister's plate. She appeared vain of honours to which her brother could lay no claim. She was not kind; but she whispered to me so that he could not hear, "He is a good fellow, but unfortunately he is rather stupid."

I had put in my pocket a superb gold snuffbox, richly enamelled and adorned with a perfect likeness of myself. I had had it made in Paris, with the intention of giving it to Madame d'Urfé and I had not done so because the painter had made me too young. I had filled it with some excellent Havana snuff which M. de Chavigny had given me and of which Thérèse was very fond; I was waiting for her to ask me for a pinch before drawing it out of my pocket.

The Abbé Gama, who had some exceedingly good snuff in an Origenela box, sent a pinch to Thérèse and she sent him her snuff in a tortoise-shell box encrusted with gold in arabesques, an exquisite piece of workmanship. Gama criticised Thérèse's snuff, while I said I found it delicious but thought I had some better myself. I took out my snuffbox and, opening it, offered her a pinch. She did not notice the portrait but agreed that my snuff was vastly superior to hers.

"Well, would you like to make an exchange?" said I.

"Certainly, give me some paper."

"That is not requisite; we will exchange the snuff and the snuffboxes."

So saying, I put Thérèse's box in my pocket and gave her mine shut. When she saw the portrait, she gave a cry which puzzled everybody, and her first motion was to kiss the portrait.

"Look," said she to Cesarino, "here is your portrait."

Cesarino looked at it in astonishment and the box passed from hand to hand. Everybody said it was my portrait, taken ten years before and might pass for a likeness of Cesarino. Thérèse got quite excited and, swearing that she would never let the box out of her hands again, went up to her son and kissed him several times. While this was going on, I watched the Abbé Gama and could see that he was making secret comments of his own on this affecting scene.

The worthy abbé went away towards evening, telling me he would expect me to breakfast next morning.

I spent the rest of the day in making love to Redegonde, and Thérèse, who saw that I was pleased with the girl, advised me to declare myself and promised that she would ask her to the house as often as I liked. But Thérèse did not know her.

Next morning Gama told me he had informed Marshal Botta that I would come to see him and he would present me at four o'clock. Then

the worthy abbé, always the slave of his curiosity, reproached me in a friendly manner for not having told him anything about my fortune.

"I did not think it was worth mentioning, but, as you are interested in the subject, I may tell you that my means are small, but that I have friends whose purses are always open to me."

"If you have true friends, you are a rich man, but true friends are scarce."

I left the Abbé Gama, my head full of Redegonde, whom I preferred to the young Corticelli, and I went to pay her a visit; but what a reception! She received me in a room in which were present her mother, her uncle and three or four dirty, untidy little monkeys—these were her brothers.

"Haven't you a better room to receive your friends in?" said I.

"I have no friends, so I don't need a room."

"Get it, my dear, and you will find the friends come fast enough. This is all very well for you to welcome your relatives in, but not persons like myself who come to do homage to your charms and your talents."

"Sir," said the mother, "my daughter has but few talents and thinks nothing of her charms, which are small."

"You are extremely modest and I appreciate your feelings; but everybody does not see your daughter with the same eyes and she pleases me greatly."

"That is an honour for her and we are duly sensible of it, but not so as to be over-proud. My daughter will see you as often as you please, but here and in no other place."

"But I am afraid of being in the way here."

"A gentleman is never in the way."

I felt ashamed, for nothing so confounds a libertine as modesty in the mouth of poverty, and, not knowing what to answer I took my leave.

I told Thérèse of my unfortunate visit and we both laughed at it; it was the best thing we could do.

"I shall be glad to see you at the opera," said she, "and you can get into my dressing-room if you give the doorkeeper a small piece of money."

The Abbé Gama came as he had promised, to take me to see Marshal Botta, a man of high talents whom the Genoa affair had already rendered famous. He was in command of the Austrian army when the people, growing angry at the sight of the foreigners, who had come only to put them under the Austrian yoke, rose in revolt and made them leave the town. This patriotic riot saved the Republic. I found him in the midst of a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, whom he left to welcome me. He talked about Venice in a way that showed he understood the country thoroughly and I conversed with him on France and, I believe, satisfied him. In his turn he spoke of the Court of Russia, at which he was staying when Elizabeth Petrovna, who was still reigning at the period in question, so easily mounted the throne of her father, Peter

the Great. "It is only in Russia," said he, "that poison enters into politics."

At the hour when the opera began, the marshal left the room and everybody went away. On my way the abbé assured me, as a matter of course, that I had pleased the governor, and I afterwards went to the theatre and obtained admission to Thérèse's dressing-room for one tester. I found her in the hands of her pretty chambermaid and she advised me to go to Redegonde's dressing-room, as she was playing a man's part and might, perhaps, allow me to be present at her toilette.

I followed her advice, but the mother would not let me come in, as her daughter was just going to dress. I assured her I would turn my back all the time she was dressing, and on this condition she let me in and made me sit down at a table on which stood a mirror which enabled me to see all I desired to good advantage, especially when she put on her breeches, either most awkwardly or most cleverly, whichever was her intention. She did not lose anything, however, for I was so pleased that, to enjoy her charms, I would have signed any conditions she cared to impose upon me.

"Redegonde must know," I said to myself, "that I could see everything in the glass." And the idea inflamed me. I did not turn round till the mother gave me leave and then I admired my charmer as a young man of five feet one, whose shape left nothing to be desired.

Redegonde went out and I followed her to the wings

"My dear," said I, "I am going to talk plainly to you. You have inflamed my passions and I shall die if you do not make me happy."

"You do not say that you will die if you chance to make me unhappy."

"I could not say so because I cannot conceive such a thing as possible. Do not trifle with me, dear Redegonde, you must be aware that I saw you in the mirror and I cannot think that you are so cruel as to arouse my passions and then leave me to despair."

"What could you have seen? I don't know what you are talking about."

"Maybe, but know that I have seen all your charms. What shall I do to possess you?"

"To possess me? I don't understand you, sir; I'm a good girl."

"I dare say; but you wouldn't be any less so after making me happy. Dear Redegonde, do not let me languish for you, but tell me my fate now this instant."

"I do not know what to tell you, but you can come and see me whenever you like."

"When shall I find you alone?"

"Alone! I am never alone."

"Well, that's of no consequence; if only your mother is present, that comes to the same thing. If she is sensible, she will pretend not to see anything and I will give you a hundred ducats each time."

"Either you are a madman or you do not know what sort of people we are."

With these words she went on and I proceeded to tell Thérèse what had passed.

"Begin," said she, "by offering the hundred ducats to the mother and, if she refuses, have no more to do with them and go elsewhere."

I returned to the dressing-room, where I found the mother alone, and without any ceremony I spoke as follows:

"Good evening, madame. I am a stranger here; I am staying only a week and am in love with your daughter. If you like to be obliging, bring her to sup with me. I will give you a hundred sequins each time, so you see my purse is in your power."

"Whom do you think you are talking to, sir? I am astonished at your impudence. Ask the townsfolk what sort of character I bear and whether my daughter is a virtuous girl or not, and you will not make such proposals again."

"Goodbye, madame."

"Goodbye, sir."

As I went out, I met Redegonde and told her word for word the conversation I had had with her mother. She burst out laughing.

"Have I done well or ill?" said I.

"Well enough, but, if you love me, come to see me."

"See you, after what your mother said?"

"Well, why not? Who knows of it?"

"Who knows? You don't know me, Redegonde. I do not care to indulge in idle hopes and I thought I had spoken to you plainly enough."

Feeling angry and vowing to have no more to do with this strange girl, I supped with Thérèse and spent three delightful hours with her. I had a great deal of writing to do the next day and kept indoors and in the evening I had a visit from the young Corticelli, her mother and her brother. She begged me to keep my promise regarding the manager of the theatre who would not let her dance the *pas de deux* stipulated for in the agreement.

"Come and breakfast with me to-morrow morning," said I, "and I will speak to the Israelite in your presence—at least, I will do so if he comes."

"I love you very much," said the young wanton. "Can't I stop a little longer here?"

"You may stop as long as you like, but, as I have some letters to finish, I must ask you to excuse me from entertaining you."

"Oh! just as you please."

I told Costa to give them some supper.

I finished my letters and felt inclined for a little amusement, so I made the girl sit by me and proceeded to flirt with her, but in such a way that her mother could make no objection. All at once the brother came up and tried to join in the sport, much to my astonishment.

"Get along with you," said I, "you are not a girl."

At this the young scoundrel proceeded to expose himself, but in such an indecent fashion that his sister, who was sitting on my knee, burst

out laughing and took refuge with her mother, who was sitting at the other end of the room in gratitude for the good supper I had given her. I rose from my chair and, after giving the impudent pederast a box on the ear, asked the mother with what intentions she had brought the young rascal to my house. By way of reply the infamous woman said, "He's a pretty lad, isn't he?"

I gave him a ducat for the blow I had given him and told the mother to begone, as she disgusted me. The pathic took my ducat, kissed my hand and they all departed.

I went to bed feeling amused at the incident and wondering at the wickedness of a mother who would prostitute her own son to the basest of vices.

Next morning I sent and asked the Jew to call on me. The Corticelli came with her mother and the Jew came soon after, just as we were going to breakfast.

I proceeded to explain the grievance of the young dancer and read the agreement he had made with her, telling him politely that I could easily force him to fulfil it. The Jew put in several excuses, of which the Corticelli demonstrated the futility. At last the son of Judah was forced to give in and promised to speak to the ballet-master the same day in order that she might dance the *pas* with the actor she named.

"And that, I hope, will please Your Excellency," he added, with a low bow, which is not often a proof of sincerity, especially among Jews.

When my guests had taken leave, I went to the Abbé Gama to dine with Marshal Botta, who had asked us to dinner. I made the acquaintance there of Sir A— Mann, the English ambassador, who was the idol of Florence, very rich, of the most pleasing manners (although an Englishman), full of wit and good taste and a great lover of the fine arts. He invited me to come next day and see his house and garden. In this home he had made, furniture, pictures, choice books, all showed the man of genius. He called on me, asked me to dinner and had the politeness to include Thérèse, her husband and Cesarino in the invitation. After dinner my son sat down at the clavier and delighted the company by his exquisite playing. While we were talking of likenesses, Sir Mann showed us some miniatures of great beauty.

Before leaving, Thérèse told me she had been thinking seriously of me.

"In what respect?" I asked.

"I have told Redegonde that I am going to call for her, that I will keep her to supper and have her taken home. You must see that this last condition is properly carried out. Come to supper, too, and have your carriage in waiting. I leave the rest to you. You will be only a few minutes with her, but that's something, and the first step leads far."

"An excellent plan. I will sup with you and my carriage shall be ready. I will tell you all about it to-morrow."

I went to the house at nine o'clock and was welcomed as an un-

expected guest. I told Redegonde that I was glad to meet her and she replied that she had not hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me. Redegonde was the only one who had any appetite; she ate capitably and laughed merrily at the stories I told her.

After supper Thérèse asked her if she would like to have a sedan chair sent for or if she would prefer to be taken home in my carriage.

"If the gentleman will be so kind," said she, "I need not send for a chair."

I thought this reply of such favourable omen that I no longer doubted of my success. After she had wished the others good night, she took my arm, pressing it as she did so; we went down the stairs and she got into the carriage. I got in after her and, on attempting to sit down, I found the place taken.

"Who is that?" I cried.

Redegonde burst out laughing and informed me it was her mother. I was done; I could not summon up courage to pass it off as a jest. Such a shock makes a man stupid, for a moment it numbs all the mental faculties and wounded self-esteem gives place only to anger.

I sat on the front seat and coldly asked the mother why she had not come up to supper with us. When the carriage stopped at their door, she asked me to come in, but I told her I would rather not. I felt that for a little more I would have boxed her ears, and the man at the house door looked very like a cut-throat.

I felt enraged and excited physically as well as mentally and, though I had never been to see the Corticelli, I told the coachman to drive there immediately, as I felt sure of finding her well disposed. Everybody was gone to bed. I knocked at the door till I got an answer, gave my name and was let in, everything being in total darkness. The mother told me she would light a candle and that, if she had expected me, she would have waited up, in spite of the cold I felt as if I were in the middle of an iceberg. I heard the girl laughing and, going up to the bed and passing my hand over it, I took hold of her brother. In the meanwhile the mother had got a candle and I saw the girl with the bedclothes up to her chin, for, like her brother, she was as naked as my hand. Although no Puritan, I was shocked.

"Why do you allow this?" I said to the mother.

"What harm is there? They are brother and sister."

"That's just what makes it a criminal matter."

"Everything is perfectly innocent."

"Possibly; but it's not a good plan."

The pathic escaped from the bed and crept into his mother's, while the little wanton told me there was really no harm, as they loved each other only as brother and sister, and that, if I wanted her to sleep by herself, all I had to do was to get her a new bed. This speech, delivered with arch simplicity in her Bolognese jargon, made me laugh with all my heart, for in the violence of her gesticulations she had disclosed half her charms and I saw nothing worth looking at. In spite of that, it was

doubtless decreed that I should fall in love with her skin, for that was all she had.

If I had been alone, I should have brought matters to a crisis on the spot, but I had a distaste to the presence of her mother and her scoundrelly brother. I was afraid lest some unpleasant scenes might follow. I gave her ten ducats to buy a bed, said good night and left the house. I returned to my lodging, cursing the too scrupulous mothers of the opera girls.

I passed the whole of the next morning with Sir A— Mann in his gallery, which contained some exquisite paintings, sculptures, mosaics and engraved gems. On leaving him, I called on Thérèse and informed her of my misadventure of the night before. She laughed heartily at my story and I laughed, too, in spite of a feeling of anger due to my wounded self-esteem.

"You must console yourself," said she. "You will not find much difficulty in filling the place in your affections."

"Ah! why are you married?"

"Well, it's done and there's no helping it. But listen to me. As you can't do without someone, take up with the Corticelli; she's as good as any other woman and won't keep you waiting long."

On my return to my lodging, I found the Abbé Gama, whom I had invited to dinner, and he asked me if I would accept a post to represent Portugal at the approaching European Congress at Augsburg. He told me that, if I did the work well, I could get anything I liked at Lisbon.

"I am ready to do my best," said I. "You have only to write to me and I will tell you where to direct your letters." This proposal made me long to become a diplomatist.

In the evening I went to the opera house and spoke to the ballet-master, the dancer who was to take part in the *pas de deux* and the Jew, who told me that my *protégée* should be satisfied in two or three days and that she should perform her favourite *pas* for the rest of the carnival. I saw the Corticelli, who told me she had got her bed, and asked me to come to supper. I accepted the invitation and, when the opera was over, I went to her house.

Her mother, feeling sure I would pay the bill, had ordered an excellent supper for four and several flasks of the best Florence wine. Besides that, she gave me a bottle of the wine called *oleatico*, which I found excellent. The three Corticellis, unaccustomed to good fare and wine, ate like a troop and began to get intoxicated. The mother and son went to bed without ceremony and the little wanton invited me to follow their example. I should have liked to do so but did not dare. It was very cold and there was no fire in the room, there was only one blanket on the bed and I might have caught a bad cold, and I was too fond of my good health to expose myself to such a danger. I therefore satisfied myself by taking her on my lap. . . .

I left her after I had repeated the performance three or four times, and gave her fifty sequins, telling her to get a good wadded coverlet

and to light a large brazier, as I was desirous of sleeping with her the next night.

Next morning I received an extremely interesting letter from Grenoble. M. de Valenglard informed me that the fair Mlle Roman, feeling convinced that her horoscope would never come true unless she went to Paris, had gone to the capital with her aunt.

Strange how her destiny was determined by my fancy for her and my aversion to marriage! For it had lain in my power to marry the handsomest woman in France, and in that case it is not likely she would have become the mistress of Louis XV. What strange whim made me indicate in her horoscope the necessity of her journeying to Paris? For, even if there were such a science as astrology, I was no astrologer. In fine, her destiny had depended on an absurdity. And in history what a number of extraordinary events would never have happened if they had not been predicted!

In the evening I went to the theatre and found my Corticelli clad in a pretty cloak; the other girls looked at me disdainfully, enraged at the place being taken, while the proud favourite caressed me with an air of triumph which became her ravishingly.

In the evening I found a good supper awaiting me, a large brazier on the hearth and a warm coverlet on the bed. The mother showed me all the things her daughter had bought, and complained that she had not got any clothes for her brother. I made her happy by giving her a few louis.

When I went to bed, I did not find my mistress in any amorous transports, but in a wanton and merry mood. She made me laugh and, as she let me do as I liked, I was satisfied. I gave her a watch when I left, and promised to sup with her on the following night. She was to dance the *pas de deux* and I went to see her do it, but to my astonishment she only danced with the other girls.

When I went to supper, I found her in despair. She wept and said that I must avenge her on the Jew, who had excused himself by putting the fault on somebody else, but that he was a liar. I promised everything to quiet her and, after spending several hours in her company, I returned home, determined to give the Jew a bad quarter of an hour.

Next morning I sent Costa to ask him to call on me, but the rascal sent back word that he was not coming and, if the Corticelli did not like his theatre, she might try another.

I was indignant, but I knew that I must dissemble, so I only laughed. Nevertheless, I had pronounced his doom, for an Italian never forgets to avenge himself on his enemy; he knows it is the pleasure of the gods.

As soon as Costa had left the room, I called Le Duc and told him the story, saying that, if I did not take vengeance, I should be dishonoured and that it was only he who could procure the scoundrel a good thrashing for daring to insult me.

"But you know, Le Duc, the affair must be kept secret."

"I need only twenty-four hours to give you an answer."

I knew what he meant and I was satisfied.

Next morning Le Duc told me he had spent the previous day in learning the Jew's abode and habits without asking anybody any questions.

"To-day I will not let him get out of my sight. I shall find out at what hour he returns home and to-morrow you shall know the result."

"Be discreet," said I, "and don't let anybody into your plans."

"Not I."

Next day he told me that, if the Jew came home at the same time and by the same way as before, he would have a thrashing before he got to bed.

"Whom have you chosen for this expedition?"

"Myself. These affairs should be kept secret, and a secret oughtn't to be known to more than two people. I am sure that everything will turn out well, but, when you are satisfied that the ass's hide has been well tanned, will there be anything to be picked up?"

"Twenty-five sequins."

"That will do nicely. When I have done the trick, I shall put on my greatcoat again and return by the back door. If necessary, Costa himself will be able to swear that I did not leave the house and that therefore I cannot have committed the assault. However, I shall put my pistols in my pocket in case of accident and, if anybody tries to arrest me, I shall know how to defend myself."

Next morning he came coolly into my room while Costa was putting on my dressing-gown and, when we were alone, he said:

"The thing's done. Instead of the Jew's running away when he received the first blow, he threw himself on to the ground. Then I tanned his hide for him nicely but, on hearing some people coming up, I ran off. I don't know whether I did for him, but I gave him sturdy blows on the head. I should be sorry if he were killed, as then he could not see about the dance."

This jest did not arouse my mirth; the matter promised to be too serious.

Thérèse had asked me to dine with the Abbé Gama and M. Sassi, a worthy man, if one may prostitute the name of "man" to describe a being whom cruelty has separated from the rest of humanity; he was the first *castrato* of the opera. Of course the Jew's mishap was discussed.

"I am sorry for him," said I, "though he is a rascally fellow."

"I am not at all sorry for him myself," said Sassi. "He's a knave. I daresay everybody will be putting down his wooden baptism to my account."

"No," said the abbé, "people say that M. Casanova did the deed for good reasons of his own."

"It will be difficult to pitch on the right man," I answered. "The rascal has pushed so many worthy people to extremities that he must have a great many thrashings owing him."

The conversation then passed to other topics and we had a very pleasant dinner.

In a few days the Jew left his bed with a large plaster on his nose and, although I was generally regarded as the author of his misfortune, the matter was gradually allowed to drop, as there were only vague suspicions to go upon. But the Corticelli, in an ecstasy of joy, was stupid enough to talk as if she were sure it was I who had avenged her, and she got into a rage when I would not admit the deed; but, as may be guessed, I was not foolish enough to do so, as her imprudence might have been a hanging matter for me.

As I was enjoying myself in these ways, I was not thinking of quitting Florence yet awhile when one day Vannini gave me a letter which someone had left for me. I opened it in his presence and found it contained a bill of exchange for two hundred Florentine crowns on Sasso Sassi. Vannini looked at it and told me it was a good one. I went into my room to read the letter and was astonished to find it signed "Charles Ivanoff." He dated it from Pistoia and told me that in his poverty and misfortune he had appealed to an Englishman who was leaving Florence for Lucca and had generously given him a bill of exchange for two hundred crowns, which he had written in his presence. It was made payable to bearer.

"I daren't cash it in Florence," he wrote, "as I am afraid of being arrested for my unfortunate affair in Genoa. I entreat you, then, to have pity on me, to get the bill cashed and bring me the money here, that I may pay my landlord and depart."

It looked like a very simple matter, but I might get into trouble, for the note might be forged; and, even if it were not, I should be declaring myself a friend, or a correspondent at all events, of a man who had been posted. In this dilemma I decided to hand the bill of exchange back to him in person. I went to the posting establishment, hired two horses and drove to Pistoia. The landlord himself took me to the rascal's room and left me alone with him. I did not stay more than three minutes and all I said was that, as Sassi knew me, I did not wish him to think that there was any kind of connection between us.

"I advise you," I said, "to give the bill to your landlord, who will cash it at M. Sassi's and bring you your change."

"I will follow your advice," said he and I therewith returned to Florence.

I thought no more of it, but in two days' time I received a visit from M. Sasso Sassi and the landlord of the inn at Pistoia. The banker showed me the bill of exchange and said that the person who had given it to me had deceived me, as it was not in the writing of the Englishman whose name it bore and, even if it were, the Englishman, not having any money with Sassi, could not draw a bill of exchange.

"The innkeeper here," said he, "discounted the bill, the Russian has gone off and, when I told him that it was a forgery, he said that he knew Charles Ivanoff had it of you and that thus he had made no

objection to cashing it; but now he wants you to return him two hundred crowns”

“Then he will be disappointed!”

I told all the circumstances of the affair to Sassi; I showed him the rascal's letter; I made Dr. Vannini, who had given it to me, come up and he said he was ready to swear that he had seen me take the bill of exchange out of the letter, that he had examined it and had thought it good.

On this the banker told the innkeeper that he had no business to ask me to pay him the money, but he persisted in his demand and dared to say I was an accomplice of the Russian.

In my indignation I ran for my cane, but the banker held me by the arm and the impertinent fellow made his escape without a thrashing.

“You had a right to be angry,” said M. Sassi, “but you must not take any notice of what the poor fellow says in his blind rage.”

He shook me by the hand and went out.

Next day the chief of police, called the “auditor” in Florence, sent me a note begging me to call on him. There was no room for hesitation, for as a stranger I felt that I might look on this invitation as a summons. He received me very politely but said I should have to pay the landlord his two hundred crowns, as he would not have discounted the bill if he had not seen me bring it. I replied that, as a judge, he could not condemn me unless he thought me the Russian's accomplice, but instead he repeated that I would have to pay.

“Sir,” I replied, “I will not pay.”

He rang the bell and bowed and I left him, walking towards the banker's, to whom I imparted the conversation I had had with the auditor. He was extremely astonished and at my request called on him to try to make him listen to reason. As we parted, I told him that I was dining with the Abbé Gama.

When I saw the abbé, I told him what had happened and he uttered a loud exclamation of astonishment.

“I foresee,” he said, “that the auditor will not let go his hold and, if M. Sassi does not succeed with him, I advise you to speak to Marshal Botta.”

“I don't think that will be necessary; the auditor can't force me to pay.”

“He can do worse.”

“What can he do?”

“He can make you leave Florence.”

“Well, I shall be astonished if he uses his power in this case, but, rather than pay, I will leave the town. Let us go to the marshal.”

We called on him at four o'clock and found there the banker, who had told him the whole story.

“I am sorry to tell you,” said M. Sassi, “that I could do nothing with the auditor and, if you want to remain in Florence, you will have to pay.”

“I will leave as soon as I receive the order,” said I, “and, as soon as

I reach another state, I will print the history of this shameful perversion of justice."

"It's an incredible, a monstrous sentence!" said the marshal. "And I am only sorry I cannot interfere. You are quite right," he added, "to leave the place rather than pay."

Early the next morning a police official brought me a letter from the auditor, informing me that, as he could not, from the nature of the case, oblige me to pay, he was forced to warn me to leave Florence in three days and Tuscany in seven. This, he added, he did in virtue of his office, but whenever the Grand Duke, to whom I might appeal, had quashed the judgment, I might return.

I took a piece of paper and wrote upon it, "Your judgment is an iniquitous one, but it shall be obeyed to the letter."

At that moment I gave orders to pack up and have all in readiness for my departure. I spent the three days of respite in amusing myself with Thérèse. I also saw the worthy Sir A— Mann and promised the Corticelli to fetch her in Lent and spend some time with her in Bologna. The Abbé Gama did not leave my side for the three days and showed himself my true friend. It was a kind of triumph for me, on every side I heard regrets at my departure and curses on the auditor. The Marshal Botta seemed to approve my conduct by giving me a dinner, the table being laid for thirty and the company being composed of the most distinguished people in Florence. This was a delicate attention on his part, of which I was deeply appreciative.

I consecrated the last day to Thérèse but could not find an opportunity to ask her for a last consoling embrace, which she would not have refused me under the circumstances and which I should still fondly remember. We promised to write often to one another and we embraced each other in a way to make her husband's heart ache. Next day I started on my journey and got to Rome in thirty-six hours.

It was midnight when I passed under the Porta del Popolo, for one may enter the Eternal City at any time. I was then taken to the custom house, which is always open, and my mails were examined. The only thing they are strict about in Rome is books, as if they feared the light. I had about thirty volumes, all more or less against the Papacy, religion or the virtues inculcated thereby. I had resolved to surrender them without any dispute, as I felt tired and wanted to go to bed, but the clerk told me politely to count them and leave them in his charge for the night and he would bring them to my hotel in the morning. I did so and he kept his word. He was well enough pleased when he pocketed the two sequins with which I rewarded him.

I put up at the Ville de Paris in the Piazza di Spagna. It is the best inn in the town. The hotel staff I found deep in sleep but, when they let me in, they asked me to wait on the ground floor while a fire was lighted in my room. All the seats were covered with dresses, petticoats and chemises, and I heard a small feminine voice begging me to sit on her bed. I approached and saw a laughing mouth and two black eyes shining like carbuncles.

"What splendid eyes!" said I. "Let me kiss them."

By way of reply she hid her head under the coverlet and I slid a hasty hand under the sheets, but, finding her quite naked, I drew it back and begged pardon. She put out her head again and I thought I read gratitude for my moderation in her eyes.

"Who are you, my angel?"

"I am Thérèse, the innkeeper's daughter, and this is my sister." There was another girl beside her, whom I had not seen as her head was under the bolster.

"How old are you?"

"Nearly seventeen."

"I hope I shall see you in my room to-morrow morning."

"Have you any ladies with you?"

"No."

"That's a pity, as we never go to the gentlemen's rooms."

"Lower the coverlet a little; I can't hear what you say."

"It's too cold."

"Dear Thérèse, your eyes make me feel as if I were on fire."

She put her head under at this and I grew daring, . . . when she let me see her face, I thought I saw delight rather than anger in her eyes and on her cheeks and I felt hopeful with regard to her. I was just going to begin again, for I felt on fire, when a handsome chambermaid came to tell me that my room was ready and my fire lighted.

"Farewell till to-morrow," said I to Thérèse, but she only answered by turning on her side to go to sleep.

I went to bed after ordering dinner for one o'clock and slept till noon, dreaming of Thérèse. When I woke up, Costa told me that he had found out where my brother lived, and had left a note at the house. This was my brother Jean, then about thirty and a pupil of the famous Raphael Mengs. This painter was then deprived of his pension on account of a war which obliged the King of Poland to live in Warsaw, as the Prussians occupied the whole electorate of Saxe. I had not seen my brother for ten years and I looked forward to our meeting. I was sitting down to table when he came and we embraced each other with transport. We spent an hour in telling, he his small adventures, and I my grand ones, and he told me I should not stay at the hotel, which was too dear, but come and live at the Chevalier Mengs's house, which contained an empty room, where I could stay at a much cheaper rate.

"As to your table, there is a restaurant in the house where one can get a capital meal."

"Your advice is excellent," said I, "but I have not the courage to follow it, as I am in love with my landlord's daughter." And I told him what had happened the night before.

"That's a mere nothing," said he, laughing. "You can cultivate her acquaintance without staying in the house."

I let myself be persuaded and promised to come to him the following day, and then we proceeded to take a walk about Rome.

I had many interesting memories of my last visit and wanted to renew my acquaintance with those who had interested me at that happy age when such impressions are so durable because they touch the heart rather than the mind; but I had to expect a good many disappointments in view of the long space of time that had elapsed since I had been in Rome.

I went to the Minerva to find Donna Cecilia; she was no longer of this world. I found out where her daughter Angelica lived and went to see her, but she gave me a poor reception and said that she really scarcely remembered me. "I can say the same," I replied, "for you are not the Angelica I used to know. Goodbye, madame!" The lapse of time had not improved her personal appearance.

I found out also where the printer's son, who had married Barbaruccia, lived, but I put off the pleasure of seeing him till another time and also my visit to the Reverend Father Georgi, who was a man of great repute in Rome. Gaspar Vivaldi had gone to live in the country.

My brother took me to see Madame Cherubini. I found her mansion to be a splendid one and the lady welcomed me in the Roman manner. I thought her pleasant and her daughters still more so, but I thought the crowd of lovers too large and miscellaneous. There was too much luxury and ceremony and the girls, one of whom was as fair as Love himself, were too polite to everybody. An interesting question was put to me, to which I answered in such a manner as to elicit another question, but to no purpose. I saw that the rank of my brother, who had introduced me, prevented my being thought a person of any consequence and, on hearing an abbé say, "He's Casanova's brother," I turned to him and said, "That's not correct; you should say Casanova is my brother."

"That comes to the same thing."

"Not at all, my dear abbé."

I said these words in a tone which commanded attention, and another abbé said, "The gentleman is quite right; it does not come to the same thing."

The first abbé made no reply to this. The one who had taken my part—and was my friend from that moment—was the famous Winckelmann, who was unhappily assassinated at Trieste twelve years afterwards.

While I was talking to him, Cardinal Alexander Albani arrived. Winckelmann presented me to His Eminence, who was nearly blind. He talked to me a great deal without saying anything worth listening to. As soon as he heard that I was the Casanova who had escaped from The Leads, he said in a somewhat rude tone that he wondered I had the hardihood to come to Rome, where on the slightest hint from the State Inquisitors in Venice an *ordine santissimo* would re-consign me to my prison. I was annoyed by this unseemly remark and replied in a dignified voice:

"It is not my hardihood in coming to Rome that Your Eminence should wonder at, but a man of any sense would wonder at the Inquistors if they had the hardihood to issue an *ordine santissimo* against me; for they would be perplexed to allege any crime against me as a pretext for thus infamously depriving me of my liberty."

This reply silenced His Eminence. He was ashamed at having taken me for a fool and to see that I thought him one. Shortly after I left and never set foot in that house again.

The Abbé Winckelmann went out with my brother and me and, as he came with me to my hotel, he did me the honour of staying to supper. Winckelmann was the second volume of the celebrated Abbé de Voisenon. He called for me next day and we went to Villa Albani to see the Chevalier Mengs, who was then living there and painting a ceiling.

My landlord Roland, who knew my brother, paid me a visit at supper. Roland came from Avignon and was fond of good living. I told him I was sorry to be leaving him to stay with my brother because I had fallen in love with his daughter Thérèse, although I had spoken to her for only a few minutes and had seen only her head.

"You saw her in bed, I will bet."

"Exactly, and I should very much like to see the rest of her. Would you be so kind as to ask her to step up for a few minutes?"

"With all my heart."

She came upstairs, seeming only too glad to obey her father's summons. She had a lithe, graceful figure, her eyes were of surpassing brilliancy, her features exquisite, her mouth charming; but, taken altogether, I did not like her so well as before. On the other hand my poor brother became enamoured of her to such an extent that he ended by becoming her slave. He married her next year and two years later took her to Dresden. I saw her five years later with a pretty baby; but after ten years of married life she died of consumption.

I found Mengs at the Villa Albani; he was an indefatigable worker and extremely original in his conceptions. He welcomed me and said he was glad to be able to lodge me at his house in Rome and that he hoped to return home himself in a few days with his whole family. I was astonished at the Villa Albani. It had been built by Cardinal Alexander and had been wholly constructed from antique materials to satisfy the cardinal's love for classic art; not only the statues and the vases, but the columns, the pedestals—in fact, everything was Greek. He was a Greek himself and had a perfect knowledge of antique work and had contrived to spend comparatively little money, considering the masterpiece that he had produced. If a sovereign monarch had had a villa like the cardinal's built, it would have cost him fifty million francs, but the cardinal made a much cheaper bargain.

As he could not get any ancient ceilings, he was obliged to have them painted and Mengs was undoubtedly the greatest and the most laborious painter of his age. It is a great pity that death carried him

off in the midst of his career, as otherwise he would have enriched the stores of art with numerous masterpieces. My brother never did anything to justify his title of pupil of this great artist. When I come to my visit to Spain in 1767, I shall have some more to say about Mengs.

As soon as I was settled with my brother, I hired a carriage, a coachman and a footman, whom I put into fancy livery, and I called on Monsignor Cornaro, auditor of the *rota*, with the intention of making my way into good society, but, fearing lest he, as a Venetian, might get compromised, he introduced me to Cardinal Passionei, who spoke of me to the sovereign pontiff.

Before I pass on to anything else, I will inform my readers of what took place on the occasion of my second visit to this odd cardinal, a great enemy of the Jesuits, a wit and a man of letters.

CHAPTER 84

CARDINAL PASSIONEI received me in a large hall, where he was writing. He begged me to wait till he had finished, but he could not ask me to take a seat, as he occupied the only chair that his vast room contained.

When he had put down his pen, he rose, came to me and, after informing me that he would tell the Holy Father of my visit, he added, "My brother Cornaro might have made a better choice as he knows the Pope does not like me."

"He thought it better to choose the man who is esteemed than the man who is merely liked."

"I don't know whether the Pope esteems me, but I am sure he knows I don't esteem him. I both liked and esteemed him before he was pope, and concurred in his election, but, since he has worn the tiara, it's a different matter; he has shown himself too much of a *coglione*."

"The conclave ought to have chosen Your Eminence."

"No, no; I'm a root-and-branch reformer and my hand would not have been stayed for fear of the vengeance of the guilty, and God alone knows what would have come of that. The only cardinal fit to be pope was Tamburini; but it can't be helped now. I hear people coming; goodbye, come again to-morrow."

What a delightful thing to hear a cardinal call the Pope a fool and name Tamburini as a fit person! I did not lose a moment in noting this pleasant circumstance down; it was too precious a morsel to let slip. But who was Tamburini? I had never heard of him. I asked Winckelmann, who came to dine with me.

"He's a man deserving of respect for his virtues, his character, his firmness and his far-seeing intelligence. He has never disguised his opinion of the Jesuits, whom he styles the fathers of deceits, intrigues

and lies; and that's what made Passionei mention him. I think, with him, that Tamburini would be a great and good pope."

I will here note down what I heard in Rome nine years later from the mouth of a tool of the Jesuits. Cardinal Tamburini was at the last gasp and the conversation turned upon him, when somebody else said, "This Benedictine cardinal is an impious fellow after all; he is on his deathbed and he asked for the *viaticum*, without wishing to purify his soul by confession."

I did not make any remark but, feeling as if I should like to know the truth of the matter, I asked somebody about it next day, my informant being a person who must have known the truth and could not have had any motive for disguising the real facts of the case. He told me that the cardinal had said mass three days before and that, if he had not asked for a confessor, it was doubtless because he had nothing to confess. Unfortunate are they that love the truth and do not seek it at its source. I hope the reader will pardon this digression, which is not without interest.

Next day I went to see Cardinal Passionei, who told me I was quite right to come early, as he wanted to learn all about my escape from The Leads, of which he had heard some wonderful tales told.

"I shall be delighted to satisfy Your Eminence, but the story is a long one."

"All the better; they say you tell it well."

"But, my lord, am I to sit down on the floor?"

"No, no; your dress is too good for that."

He rang his bell and, having told one of his gentlemen to send up a seat, a servant brought in a stool. A seat without a back and without arms! It made me quite angry. I cut my story short, told it badly and had finished in a quarter of an hour.

"I write better than you speak," said he.

"My lord, I never speak well except when I am at my ease."

"But you don't hesitate to speak your mind with me?"

"No, my lord, a man and especially a philosopher can never make me afraid; but this stool of yours . . ."

"You like to be at your ease?"

"Above all things."

"Take this; it is the funeral oration of Prince Eugène; I make you a present of it. I hope you will approve of my Latinity. You can kiss the Pope's feet to-morrow at ten o'clock."

When I got home, as I reflected on the character of this strange cardinal—a wit, haughty, vain and boastful—I resolved to make him a fine present. It was the *Pandectarum Liber Unicus* which M. de F— had given me at Berne and which I did not know what to do with. It was a folio well printed on fine paper, choicely bound and in perfect preservation. As chief librarian, the present should be a valuable one to him, all the more as he had a large private library, of which my friend the Abbé Winckelmann was librarian. I therefore wrote a short Latin letter, which I enclosed in another to Winckelmann, whom I

begged to present my offering to His Eminence. I thought it was as valuable as his funeral oration at any rate, and I hoped that he would give me a more comfortable chair in future.

Next morning, at the time appointed, I went to Monte Cavallo, which ought to be called Monte Cavalli, as it gets its name from two fine statues of horses standing on a pedestal in the midst of the square where the Holy Father's palace is situated.

I had no real need of being presented to the Pope by anyone, as any Christian is at liberty to go in when he sees the door open. Besides, I had known His Holiness when he was Bishop of Padua; but I had preferred to claim the honour of being introduced by a cardinal.

After I had saluted the Head of the Faithful and kissed the holy cross embroidered on his holy slipper, the Pope put his right hand on my left shoulder and said he remembered that I always forsook the assembly at Padua when he intoned the *Rosary*.

"Holy Father, I have much worse sins than that on my conscience, so I come prostrate at your feet to receive your absolution."

He then gave me his benediction and asked me very graciously what he could do for me.

"I beg Your Holiness to plead for me, that I may be able to return to Venice."

"We will speak of it to the ambassador and then we will speak again to you on the matter. Do you often go and see Cardinal Passionei?"

"I have been three times. He gave me his funeral oration on Prince Eugène and in return I sent him the *Pandects*."

"Has he accepted them?"

"I think so, Holy Father."

"If he has, he will send Winckelmann to pay you for them."

"That would be treating me like a bookseller; I will not accept any payment."

"Then he will return the volume of the *Pandects*; we are sure of it; he always does so."

"If His Eminence returns me the *Pandects*, I will return him his funeral oration."

At this the Pope laughed till his sides shook.

"We shall be pleased to hear the end of the story without anyone being informed of our innocent curiosity."

With these words, a long benediction delivered with much unction informed me that my audience was at an end.

As I was leaving His Holiness's palace, I was accosted by an old abbé, who asked me respectfully if I were not the M. Casanova who escaped from The Leads.

"Yes," said I, "I am the man."

"Heaven be praised, worthy sir, that I see you again in such good estate!"

"But whom have I the honour of addressing?"

"Don't you recollect me? I am Momolo, formerly gondolier in Venice."

"Have you entered holy orders, then?"

"Not at all, but here everyone wears the cassock. I am the first *scopatore* (sweeper) of His Holiness the Pope."

"I congratulate you on your appointment, but you mustn't mind me laughing."

"Laugh as much as you like. My wife and daughters laugh when I put on the cassock and bands and I laugh myself, but here the dress gains one respect. Come and see us."

"Where do you live?"

"Behind the Trinity of Monti, here's my address."

"I will come to-night."

I went home delighted with this meeting and determined to enjoy the evening with my Venetian boatman. I got my brother to come with me and I told him how the Pope had received me.

The Abbé Winckelmann came in the afternoon and informed me that I was fortunate enough to be high in favour with his cardinal and that the book I had sent him was very valuable; it was a rare work and in much better condition than the Vatican copy.

"I am commissioned to pay you for it."

"I told His Eminence it was a present."

"He never accepts books as presents and he wants yours for his own library; and, as he is librarian of the Vatican Library, he is afraid lest people might say unpleasant things."

"That's all very well, but I am not a bookseller; and, as this book cost me only the trouble of accepting it, I am determined to sell it only at the same price. Pray ask the cardinal to honour me by accepting it."

"He is sure to send it back to you."

"He can if he likes, but I will send back his funeral oration, as I am not going to be under an obligation to anyone who refuses to take a present from me."

Next morning the eccentric cardinal returned me my *Pandects* and I immediately returned his funeral oration with a letter in which I pronounced it a masterpiece of composition, though I had barely glanced over it in reality. My brother told me I was wrong, but I did not trouble about what he said, not caring to guide myself by his rulings.

In the evening my brother and I went to the *scopatore santissimo*, who was expecting me and had announced me to his family as a prodigy of a man. I introduced my brother and proceeded to a close scrutiny of the family. I saw an elderly woman, four girls, of whom the eldest was twenty-four, two small boys and, all about, universal ugliness. It was not inviting for a man of voluptuous tastes, but I was there and the best thing was to put a good face on it, so I stayed and enjoyed myself. Besides the general ugliness, the household presented the picture of misery, for the *scopatore santissimo* and his numerous family were obliged to live on two hundred Roman crowns a year and, as there are no perquisites attached to the office of apostolic sweeper,

he was compelled to furnish all needs out of this slender sum. In spite of that, Momolo was a most generous man. As soon as he saw me seated, he told me he should have liked to give me a good supper, but there was only pork chops and a polenta.

"They are very nice," said I, "but will you allow me to send for half a dozen flasks of Orvieto from my lodging?"

"You are master here."

I wrote a note to Costa, telling him to bring the six flasks directly, with a cooked ham. He came in half an hour and the four girls cried when they saw him, "What a fine fellow!" I saw Costa was delighted with this reception and said to Momolo, "If you like him as well as your girls, I will let him stay."

Costa was charmed with such honour being shown him and, after thanking me, went into the kitchen to help the mother with the polenta.

The large table was covered with a clean cloth and soon after they brought in two huge dishes of polenta and an enormous pan full of chops. We were just going to begin when a knocking on the street door was heard.

"'Tis Signora Maria and her mother," said one of the boys.

At this announcement I saw the four girls pulling a wry face. "Who asked them?" said one. "What do they want?" said another. "What troublesome people they are!" said a third. "They might have stayed at home," said the fourth. But the good, kindly father said, "My children, they are hungry and they shall share what Providence has given us."

I was deeply touched with the worthy man's kindness. I saw that true Christian charity is more often to be found in the breasts of the poor than the rich, who are so well provided for that they cannot feel for the wants of others.

While I was making these wholesome reflections, the two hungry ones came in. One was a young woman of a modest and pleasant aspect and the other was her mother, who seemed very humble and as if ashamed of their poverty. The daughter saluted the company with that natural grace which is a gift of Nature, apologising in some embarrassment for her presence and saying that she would not have taken the liberty to come if she had known there was company. The worthy Momolo was the only one who answered her and he said, kindly, that she had done quite right to come, and put her a chair between my brother and myself. I looked at her and thought her a perfect beauty.

Then the eating began and there was no more talking. The polenta was excellent, the chops delicious and the ham perfect and in less than an hour the board was as bare as if there had been nothing on it, but the Orvieto kept the company in good spirits. They began to talk of the lottery which was to be drawn the day after next and all the girls mentioned the numbers on which they had risked a few bajocchi.

"If I could be sure of just one number," said I, "I would stake something on it."

The younger Mariuccia told me that, if one number would do, she could give me one. I laughed at this offer, but in the gravest way she named me the number 27.

"Is the lottery still open?" I asked the Abbé Momolo.

"Till midnight," he replied, "and, if you like, I will go and get the number for you."

"Here are fifty crowns," said I, "put twenty-five crowns on 27—this for these five young ladies—and the other twenty-five on 27 coming out the fifth number, and this I will keep for myself."

He went out directly and returned with the two tickets.

My pretty neighbour thanked me and said she was sure of winning, but did not think I would succeed, as it was not probable that 27 would come out fifth.

"I am sure of it," I answered, "for you are the fifth young lady I saw in this house." This made everybody laugh. Momolo's wife told me I would have done much better if I had given the money to the poor, but her husband told her to be quiet, as she did not know my intent. My brother laughed and told me I had done a foolish thing. "I do, sometimes," said I, "but we shall see how it turns out and, when one plays, one is obliged either to win or lose."

I managed to squeeze my fair neighbour's hand and she returned the pressure with all her strength. From that time I knew my fate with Mariuccia was sealed. I left them at midnight, begging the worthy Momolo to ask me again in two days' time, that we might rejoice together over our winnings. On our way home my brother said I had either become as rich as Cræsus or had gone mad. I told him that both suppositions were incorrect, but that Mariuccia was as handsome as an angel, and he agreed.

Next day Mengs returned to Rome and I supped with him and his family. He had an exceedingly ugly sister, who, for all that, was a good and talented woman. She had fallen deeply in love with my brother and it was easy to see that the flame was not yet extinguished, but, whenever she spoke to him (which she did whenever she could get an opportunity) he looked another way.

She was an exquisite painter of miniatures and a capital hand at catching a likeness. To the best of my belief, she is still living in Rome with Maroni, her husband. She often used to speak of my brother to me and one day she said that he must be the most thankful of men or he would not despise her so. I was not curious enough to inquire what claims she had to his gratitude.

Mengs's wife was a good and pretty woman, attentive to her household duties and very submissive to her husband, though she could not have loved him, for he was anything but amiable. He was obstinate and fierce in his manner and, when he dined at home, he made a point of not leaving the table until he was drunk; out of his own house he was temperate to the extent of not drinking anything but water. His

wife carried her obedience so far as to serve as his model for all the nude figures he painted. I spoke to her one day about this unpleasant obligation and she said that her confessor had charged her to fulfil it, "for," said he, "if your husband has another woman for model, he will be sure to enjoy her before painting her, and that sin would be laid to your charge."

After supper Winckelmann, tipsy, like the other male guests, played with Mengs's children. There was nothing of the pedant about this philosopher; he loved children and young people, and his cheerful disposition made him delight in all kinds of enjoyment.

Next day, as I was going to pay my court to the Pope, I saw Momolo in the first ante-chamber and took care to remind him of the polenta for the evening.

As soon as the Pope saw me, he said, "The Venetian ambassador has informed us that, if you wish to return to your native land, you must go and present yourself before the secretary of the Tribunal."

"Most Holy Father, I am quite ready to take this step if Your Holiness will grant me a letter of commendation written with your own hand. Without this powerful protection, I should never dream of exposing myself to the risk of being again shut up in a place from which I escaped by a miracle and the help of the Almighty."

"You are gaily dressed; you do not look as if you were going to church."

"True, Most Holy Father, but neither am I going to a ball."

"We have heard all about the presents being sent back. Confess that you did so to gratify your pride."

"Yes, but also to lower a pride greater than mine."

The Pope smiled at this reply and I knelt down and begged him to permit me to present the volume of *Pandects* to the Vatican Library. By way of reply, he gave me his blessing, which signifies in papal language, "Rise; your request is granted."

"We will send you," said he, "a mark of our *singular affection* for you without your having to pay any fees."

A second blessing bade me begone, and I have often felt what a good thing it would be if this kind of dismissal could be employed in general society to send away importunate petitioners to whom one does not dare say, "Go away!"

I was extremely curious to know what the Pope had meant by "a mark of our singular affection." I was afraid that it would be a blessed rosary, with which I should not have known what to do.

When I got home, I sent the book by Costa to the Vatican and then went to dine with Mengs. While we were eating the soup, the winning numbers from the lottery were brought in. My brother glanced at them and looked at me with astonishment. I was not thinking of the subject at that moment and his gaze surprised me.

"Twenty-seven," he cried, "came out fifth!"

"All the better," said I. "We shall have some amusement out of it."

I told the story to Mengs, who said, "It's a lucky folly for you this time, but it is none the less a folly."

He was quite right and I told him I agreed with him, but I added that, to make a worthy use of the fifteen hundred Roman crowns which Fortune had given me, I would go and spend fifteen days at Naples.

"I will come, too," said the Abbé Alfani. "I will pass for your secretary."

"With all my heart," I answered. "I shall keep you to your word."

I asked Winckelmann to come and eat polenta with the *scopatore santissimo* and told my brother to show him the way. I then called on the Marquis Belloni, my banker, to look into my accounts and get a letter of credit on the firm at Naples who were his agents. I still had two hundred thousand francs. I had jewellery worth thirty thousand francs, and fifty thousand florins in Amsterdam.

I got to Momolo's in the dusk of the evening and found Winckelmann and my brother already there, but, instead of mirth reigning round the board, I saw sad faces on all sides.

"What's the matter with the girls?" I asked Momolo.

"They are vexed that you did not stake for them in the same way as you did for yourself."

"People are never satisfied. If I had staked for them as I did for myself and the number had come out first instead of fifth, they would have got nothing and they would have been vexed then. Two days ago they had nothing and now that they have twenty-seven crowns apiece, they ought to be contented."

"That's just what I tell them, but all women are the same."

"And men, too, dear countryman, unless they are philosophers. Gold does not spell happiness and mirth can be found only in hearts devoid of care. Let us say no more about it but be happy."

Costa placed upon the table a basket containing ten packets of sweets.

"I will distribute them," said I, "when everybody is here."

On this, Momolo's second daughter told me that Mariuccia and her mother were not coming, but that they would send them the sweets."

"Why are they not coming?"

"The girls had a quarrel yesterday," said the father, "and Mariuccia, who was in the right, went away saying that she would never come here again."

"You ungrateful girls!" said I to my host's daughters. "Don't you know that it is to her that you owe your winnings, for she gave me the number twenty-seven, which I should never have thought of. Quick! think of some way to make her come, or I will go away and take all the sweets with me."

"You are quite right," said Momolo.

The mortified girls looked at one another and begged their father to fetch her.

"No," said he, "that won't do; you made her say that she would never come here again and you must make up the quarrel."

They held a short consultation and then, asking Costa to go with them, they went to fetch her.

In half an hour they returned in triumph and Costa was quite proud of the part he had taken in the reconciliation. I then distributed the sweets, taking care to give the two best packets to the fair Maria.

A noble polenta was placed upon the board, flanked by two large dishes of pork chops. But Momolo, who knew my tastes and whom I had made rich in the person of his daughters, added to the feast some delicate dishes and excellent wine. Mariuccia was simply dressed, but her elegance and beauty and the modesty of her demeanour completely seduced me.

• We could express our mutual flames only by squeezing each other's hands, and she did this so feelingly that I could not doubt her love. As we were going out, I took care to go downstairs beside her and asked if I could not meet her by herself, to which she replied by making an appointment with me for the next day at eight o'clock at the Trinity of Monti.

Mariuccia was tall and shapely, a perfect picture, as fair as a white rose and calculated to inspire voluptuous desires. She had beautiful light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes and exquisitely arched eyelids. Her mouth, the vermilion of her lips and her ivory teeth were all perfect. Her well-shaped forehead gave her an air approaching the majestic Kindness and gaiety sparkled in her eyes, while her plump, white hands, her rounded finger tips, her pink nails, her breast, which the corset seemed scarcely able to restrain, her dainty feet and her prominent hips made her worthy of the chisel of Praxiteles. She was just in her eighteenth year but so far had escaped the connoisseurs. By a lucky chance I came across her in a poor and wretched street and was fortunate enough to insure her happiness.

It may easily be believed that I did not fail to keep the appointment and, when she was sure I had seen her, she went out of the church. I followed her at a considerable distance; she entered a ruined building and I after her. She climbed a flight of steps which seemed to be built in air and, when she had reached the top, she turned.

"No one will come and look for me here," said she, "so we can talk freely together."

I sat beside her on a stone and then declared my passionate love for her.

"Tell me," I added, "what I can do to make you happy, for I love you."

"Make me happy and I will yield to your desires, for I love you."

"Tell me what I can do."

"You can take me out of the poverty and misery which overwhelm me. I live with my mother, who is a good woman but devout to the point of superstition; she will damn my soul in her efforts to save it. She finds fault with my keeping myself clean because I have to touch myself when I wash, and that might give rise to evil desires. If you had given me the money you made me win in the lottery as a simple

alms, she would have made me refuse it because you might have had evil intentions. She allows me to go by myself to mass because our confessor told her she might do so, but I dare not stay away a minute beyond the time, except on feast days, when I am allowed to pray in the church for two or three hours. We can meet only here but, if you wish to soften my lot in life, you can do as follows:

"A fine young man, who is a hairdresser and bears an excellent character, saw me at Momolo's a fortnight ago and met me at the church door next day and gave me a letter. He declared himself my lover and said that, if I could bring him a dowry of four hundred crowns, he could open a shop, furnish it and marry me.

"*'I am poor,'* I answered, *'and have only a hundred crowns in charity tickets, which my confessor keeps for me.'* Now I have two hundred crowns, for, if I marry, my mother will willingly give me her share of the money you made us win. You can therefore make me happy by getting me tickets to the amount of two hundred crowns more. Take the tickets to my confessor, who is a very good man and fond of me; he will not say anything to my mother about it."

"I needn't go about seeking charity tickets, my angel. I will take two hundred piastres to your confessor to-morrow and you must manage the rest yourself. Tell me his name and to-morrow I will tell you what I have done, but not here, as the wind and the cold would be the death of me. You can leave it to me to find a room where we shall be at our ease and without any danger of people suspecting that we have spent an hour together. I will meet you at the church to-morrow at the same hour, and, when you see me follow me."

Mariuccia told me her confessor's name and allowed me all the caresses possible in our uncomfortable position. The kisses she gave me in return for mine left no doubt in my mind as to her love for me. As nine o'clock struck, I left her, perishing with cold but burning with desire, my only thought being where to find a room in which I might possess myself of the treasure the next day.

On leaving the ruined palace, instead of returning to the Piazza di Spagna, I turned to the left and passed along a narrow, dirty street inhabited only by people of the lowest sort. As I slowly walked along, a woman came out of her house and asked me politely if I were looking for anybody.

"I am looking for a room to let."

"There are none here, sir, but you will find a hundred in the square."

"I know it, but I want the room to be here, not for the sake of the expense, but that I may be sure of being able to spend an hour or so of a morning with a person in whom I am interested. I am ready to pay anything."

"I understand what you mean and you should have a room in my house if I had one to spare, but a neighbour of mine has one on the ground floor and, if you will wait a moment, I will go and speak to her."

"You will oblige me very much."

"Kindly step in here."

I entered a poor room, where all seemed wretchedness, and I saw two children doing their lessons. Soon after the good woman came back and asked me to follow her. I took several pieces of money from my pocket and put them down on the only table which this poor place contained. I must have seemed very generous, for the poor mother came and kissed my hand with the utmost gratitude. So pleasant is it to do good that now, when I have nothing left, the remembrance of the happiness I have given to others at small cost is almost the only pleasure I enjoy.

I went to a neighbouring house, where a woman received me in an empty room, which she told me she would let cheaply if I would pay three months in advance and bring in my own furniture.

"What do you ask for the three months' rent?"

"Three Roman crowns."

"If you will see to the furnishings of the room this very day, I will give you twelve crowns."

"Twelve crowns! What furniture do you want?"

"A good clean bed, a small table covered with a clean cloth, four good chairs and a large brazier, with plenty of fire in it, for I am nearly perishing of cold here. I shall come only occasionally in the morning and leave by noon at the latest."

"Come at three o'clock, then, to-day, and you will find everything to your satisfaction."

From there I went to the confessor. He was a French monk, about sixty, a fine and benevolent-looking man, who won one's respect and confidence.

"Reverend father," I began, "I saw at the house of Abbé Momolo, *scopatore santissimo*, a young girl named Maria, whose confessor you are. I fell in love with her and offered her money to try to seduce her. She replied that, instead of trying to lead her into sin, I would do better to get her some charity tickets, that she might be able to marry a young man who loved her and would make her happy. I was touched by what she said, but my passion still remained. I spoke to her again and said that I would give her two hundred crowns for nothing and that her mother should keep them.

"'That would be my ruin,' she said. 'My mother would think the money was the price of sin and would not accept it. If you are really going to be so generous, take the money to my confessor and ask him to do what he can for my marriage.'

"Here, then, reverend father, is the sum of money for the good girl; be kind enough to take charge of it, and I will trouble her no more. I am going to Naples the day after to-morrow and I hope, when I come back, she will be married."

The good confessor took the hundred sequins and gave me a receipt, telling me that, in interesting myself on behalf of Mariuccia, I was making happy a most pure and innocent dove, whom he had confessed since she was five years old, and that he had often told her

she might communicate without making her confession because he knew she was incapable of mortal sin.

"Her mother," he added, "is a sainted woman and, as soon as I have inquired into the character of the future husband, I will soon bring the marriage about. No one shall ever know from whom this generous gift comes."

After putting this matter in order, I dined with the Chevalier Mengs and willingly consented to go with the whole family to the Aliberti Theatre that evening. I did not forget, however, to go and inspect the room I had taken. I found all my orders executed and gave twelve crowns to the landlady and took the key, telling her to light the fire at seven every morning.

So impatient did I feel for the next day to come that I thought the opera detestable, and the night for me was a sleepless one.

Next morning I went to the church before the time and, when Mariuccia came, feeling sure that she had seen me, I went out. She followed me at a distance and, when I got to the door of the lodging, I turned for her to be sure that it was I, and then went in and found the room well warmed. Soon after Mariuccia came in looking timid, embarrassed and as if she were doubtful of the path she was treading. I clasped her in my arms and reassured her by my tender embraces, and her courage rose when I showed her the confessor's receipt and told her that the worthy man had promised to arrange her marriage. She kissed my hand in a transport of delight, assuring me that she would never forget my kindness. Then, as I urged her to make me a happy man, she said, "We have three hours before us, as I told my mother I was going to give thanks to God for having made me a winner in the lottery."

This reassured me and I took my time, undressing her by degrees and unveiling her charms one by one, delighted to encounter not the slightest resistance on her part. All the time she kept her eyes fixed on mine, as if to soothe her modesty; but, when I beheld and felt all her charms, I was in ecstasy. What a body! What beauties! Nowhere was there the slightest imperfection. She was like Venus rising from the foam of the sea.

When the clock struck ten, she began to be restless, and we hurriedly put on our clothes. I had to go to Naples, but I assured her that the desire of embracing her once more before her marriage would hasten my return to Rome. I promised to take another hundred crowns to her confessor, advising her to spend the money she had won in the lottery on her trousseau.

"I shall be at Momolo's to-night, dearest, and you must come, too; but we must appear indifferent to each other, though our hearts be full of joy, lest those malicious girls suspect our mutual understanding."

"It is all the more necessary to be cautious," she replied, "as I have noticed that they suspect that we love each other."

Before we parted, she thanked me for what I had done for her and

begged me to believe that, her poverty notwithstanding, she had given herself for love alone.

I was the last to leave the house and I told my landlady that I should be away for ten or twelve days. I then went to the good confessor to give him the hundred crowns I had promised my mistress. When the kind old Frenchman heard that I had made this fresh sacrifice that Mariuccia might be able to spend her lottery winnings on her clothes, he told me that he would call on the mother that very day and urge her to consent to her daughter's marriage, and also learn where the young man lived. On my return from Naples I heard that he had faithfully carried out his promise.

I was sitting at table with Mengs when a chamberlain of the Holy Father called. When he came in, he asked M. Mengs if I lived there and, on that gentleman pointing me out, he gave me, from his holy master, the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur, with the diploma and a patent under the pontifical seal, which in my quality as doctor of laws, made me a prothonotary-apostolic *extra urbem*.

I felt that I had been highly honoured and told the bearer that I would go the next day and thank my new sovereign and ask his blessing. The Chevalier Mengs embraced me as a brother, but I had an advantage over him in not being obliged to pay anything, for the great artist had had to disburse twenty-five Roman crowns to have his diploma made out. There is a saying at Rome, *Sine effusione sanguinis non fit remissio*, which may be interpreted, "Nothing without money." And, as a matter of fact, one can do anything with money in the Holy City.

Feeling highly flattered at the favour the Holy Father had shown me, I put on the cross, which hung from a broad red ribbon, red being the colour worn by the Knights of St. John of the Lateran, the companions of the palace, *comites palatini* or counts palatine. About the same time poor Cahusac, author of the opera of Zoroaster, went mad for joy on the receipt of the same order. I was not so bad as that, but I confess, to my shame, that I was so proud of the decoration that I asked Winckelmann whether I would be allowed to have the cross set with diamonds and rubies. He said I could if I liked and, if I wanted such a cross, he could get me one cheap. I was delighted and bought it to make a show at Naples, but I had not the face to wear it in Rome. When I went to thank the Pope, I wore the cross in my buttonhole out of modesty. Five years afterwards, when I was in Warsaw, Czartoryski, a Russian prince palatine, made me leave it off by saying:

"What are you doing with that wretched bauble? It's a drug in the market and no one but an impostor would wear it now."

The Popes knew this quite well, but they continued to give the cross to ambassadors, while they also gave it to their *valets de chambre*. One has to wink at a good many things in Rome.

In the evening Momolo gave me a supper by way of celebrating my new dignity. I recouped him for the expense by holding a bank at faro,

at which I was dexterous enough to lose forty crowns to the family without showing the slightest partiality to Mariuccia, who won like the rest. She found an opportunity to tell me that her confessor had called on her, that she had told him where her future husband lived and that the worthy monk had obtained her mother's consent to the hundred crowns being spent on her trousseau.

I noticed that Momolo's second daughter had taken a fancy to Costa, and I told Momolo that I was going to Naples but would leave my man in Rome, and that, if I found a marriage had been arranged on my return, I would gladly pay the expense of the wedding.

Costa liked the girl, but he did not marry her then, for fear of my claiming the first fruits. He was a fool of a peculiar kind, though fools of all sorts are common enough. He married her a year later after robbing me, but I shall speak of that later.

Next day, after I had breakfasted and duly embraced my brother, I set out in a nice carriage with the Abbé Alfani, Le Duc preceding me on horseback, and I reached Naples at a time when everybody was in a state of excitement because an eruption of Vesuvius seemed imminent. At the last stage the innkeeper had me read the will of his father, who had died during the eruption of 1754. He said that in the year 1761 God would overwhelm the sinful town of Naples, and the worthy host consequently advised me to return to Rome. Alfani took the thing seriously and said that we would do well to be warned by so evident an indication of the will of God. The event was predicted, therefore it had to happen. Thus a good many people reason but, as I was not of the number, I proceeded on my way.

CHAPTER 85

I SHALL not, dear reader, attempt the impossible, however much I should like to describe the joy, the happiness, I may say the ecstasy, which I experienced in returning to Naples, of which I had such pleasant memories and where, eighteen years before, I had made my first fortune in returning from Mataro. As I had come there for the second time to keep a promise I had made to the Duke de Matalone to come and see him at Naples, I ought to have visited this nobleman at once; but, foreseeing that, from the time I did so, I should have little liberty left me, I began by inquiring after all my old friends.

I walked out early in the morning and called on Belloni's agent. He cashed my letter of credit and gave me as many bank notes as I liked, promising that nobody should know that we did business together. From the banker's I started out to call on Antonio Casanova, but they told me he lived near Salerno, on an estate he had bought which gave him the title of marquis. I was vexed, but I had no right to expect to find Naples in the *status quo* I had left it. Polo was dead; his son was living at St. Lucia with his wife and children; he was a

boy when I had last seen him and, though I should have much liked to see him again, I had no time to do so.

It may be imagined that I did not forget the advocate, Castelli husband of my dear Lucrezia, whom I had loved so well at Rome and Tivoli. I longed to see her face once more and I thought of the joy with which we should recall old times that I could never forget. But Castelli had been dead for some years and his widow lived at a distance of twenty miles from Naples. I resolved not to return to Rome without embracing her. As to Lelio Caraffa, he was still alive and residing at the Matalone Palace.

I returned, feeling tired with my researches, dressed with care and drove to the Matalone Palace, where they told me that the duke was at table. I did not stop for that, but had my name sent in and the duke came out and did me the honour of embracing me and *thouing* me, and then presented me to his wife, a daughter of the Duke de Bovino, and to the numerous company at table. I told him I had come to Naples only in fulfilment of the promise I had made him in Paris.

"Then," said he, "you must stay with me." And, without waiting for my answer, he ordered my luggage to be brought from the inn and my carriage to be placed in his coach-house. I accepted his invitation.

One of the guests, a fine-looking man, on hearing my name announced, said gaily, "If you bear my name, you must be one of my father's bastards."

"No," said I, directly, "one of your mother's."

This repartee made everybody laugh and the gentleman who had addressed me came and embraced me, not in the least offended. The joke was explained to me. His name was Casalnova, not Casanova, and he was duke and lord of the fief of that name.

"Did you know," said the Duke de Matalone, "that I had a son?"

"I was told so but did not believe it, but now I must do penance for my incredulity, for I see before me an angel capable of working this miracle."

The duchess blushed but did not reward my compliment with so much as a glance, but all the company applauded what I had said, as it was notorious that the duke had been impotent before his marriage. The duke sent for his son; I admired him and told the father that the likeness was perfect. A merry monk, who sat at the right hand of the duchess, said more truthfully that there was no likeness at all. He had scarcely uttered the words when the duchess coolly gave him a box on the ear, which the monk received with the best grace imaginable.

I talked away to the best of my ability and in half an hour's time had won the good graces of everyone except the duchess, who remained inflexible. I tried to make her talk for two days without success; so, as I did not care much about her, I left her to her pride.

As the duke was taking me to my room, he noticed my Spaniard and asked where my secretary was, and, when he saw that it was the

Abbé Alfani, who had taken the title of secretary so as to escape the notice of the Neapolitans, he said, "The abbé is very wise, for he has deceived so many people with his false antiques that he might have got into trouble."

He took me to his stables, where he had some superb horses. Arab, English and Andalusian, and then to his gallery, a very fine one; to his large and choice library; and lastly to his study, where he had a fine collection of prohibited books.

I was reading titles and turning over leaves when the duke said, "Promise to observe the most absolute secrecy on what I am going to show you."

I promised without making any difficulty about it, but I expected a surprise of some sort. He then showed me a satire which I could not understand, but which was meant to turn the whole Court into ridicule. Never was there a secret so easily kept.

"You must come to the St. Charles Theatre," said he, "and I will present you to the handsomest ladies in Naples and afterwards you can go when you like, as my box is always open to my friends. I will also introduce you to my mistress and she, I am sure, will always be glad to see you."

"What! you have a mistress?"

"Yes, but only for form's sake, as I am very fond of my wife. All the same, I am supposed to be deeply in love with her, and even jealous, as I never introduce anyone to her and do not allow her to receive any visitors."

"But does not your young and handsome duchess object to your keeping a mistress?"

"My wife could not possibly be jealous, as she knows that I am impotent—except, of course, with her."

"I see, but it seems strange. Can one be said to have a mistress whom one does not love?"

"I did not say I do not love her; on the contrary, I am very fond of her; she has a keen and pleasant wit, but she interests my head rather than my heart."

"I see; but I suppose she is ugly."

"Ugly? You shall see her to-night and you can tell me what you think of her afterwards. She is a handsome and well educated girl of seventeen."

"Can she speak French?"

"As well as a Frenchwoman."

"I am longing to see her."

When we got to the theatre, I was introduced to several ladies, but none of them pleased me. The king, a mere boy, sat in his box in the middle of the theatre, surrounded by his courtiers, richly but tastefully dressed. The pit was full and the boxes also. The latter were ornamented with mirrors and on that occasion were all illuminated for some reason or other. It was a magnificent scene, but all this glitter and light put the stage into the background. After we had gazed for

some time at this scene, which is almost peculiar to Naples, the duke took me to his private box and introduced me to his friends, who consisted of all the wits in the town.

I have often laughed on hearing philosophers declare that the intelligence of a nation is not so much the result of the climate as of education. Such sages should be sent to Naples and then to St. Petersburg and be told to reflect, or simply to look before them. If the great Boerhaave had lived in Naples, he would have learnt more about the nature of sulphur by observing its effects on vegetables and still more on animals. In Naples, and Naples alone, water, and nothing but water, will cure diseases which are fatal elsewhere, despite the doctors' efforts. - The duke, who had left me to the wits for a short time, returned and took me to the box of his mistress, who was accompanied by an old lady of respectable appearance. As he went in he said, "*Leonilda mia, ti presento il cavaliere Don Giacomo Casanova, Veneziano, amico mio.*"

She received me kindly and modestly and stopped listening to the music to talk to me.

When a woman is pretty, one recognises her charms instantaneously; if one has to examine her closely, her beauty is doubtful. Leonilda was strikingly beautiful. I smiled and looked at the duke, who had told me he loved her like a daughter and kept her only for form's sake. He understood the glance and said, "You may believe me."

"It's incredible," I replied.

Leonilda no doubt understood what we meant and said, with a shy smile, "Whatever is possible is credible."

"Quite so," said I, "but one may believe or not believe, according to the various degrees of possibility."

"I think it is easier to believe than to disbelieve. You came to Naples yesterday; that's incredible and yet true."

"Why incredible?"

"Would any man suppose that a stranger would come to Naples at a time when the inhabitants are trembling with alarm?"

"Indeed, I have felt afraid till this moment, but now I feel quite at my ease, since, you being here, St. Januarius will surely protect Naples."

"Why?"

"Because I am sure he loves you. But you are laughing at me!"

"It is such a funny idea. I am afraid that, if I had a lover like St. Januarius, I should not grant him many favours."

"Is he very ugly then?"

"If his portrait is a good likeness. You can see for yourself by examining his statue."

Gaiety leads to freedom and freedom to friendship. Mental graces are superior to bodily charms.

Leonilda's frankness inspired my confidence and I led the conversation to love, on which she talked like a past mistress.

"Love," said she, "unless it leads to the possession of the beloved

object, is a mere torment; if bounds are placed to passion, love must die."

"You are right, and the enjoyment of a beautiful object is not a true pleasure unless it be preceded by love."

"If love precedes the enjoyment, it no doubt accompanies it; but I am not so sure that it follows it."

"True, enjoyment is often the death of love."

"It is a selfish child, which kills its own father; and, if after enjoyment love still continue in the heart of one, it is worse than murder, for the party in whom love still survives must needs be wretched."

"You are right, and from your strictly logical arguments I conjecture that you would have the senses kept in subjection—that is too hard!"

"May God preserve me from that Platonic affection devoid of love, but I leave you to guess what my maxim would be."

"To love and enjoy, to enjoy and love. Turn and turn about."

"You have hit the mark."

With this, Leonilda burst out laughing and the duke kissed her hand. Her governess, not understanding French, was attending to the opera, but I was in flames.

Leonilda was only seventeen and as pretty a girl as the heart could desire.

The duke repeated a lively epigram of La Fontaine's on Enjoyment, which is found only in the first edition of his works. It begins as follows:

*La jouissance et les désirs
Sont ce que l'homme a de plus rare;
Mais ce ne sont pas vrais plaisirs
Dès le moment qu'on les sépare.*

I have translated this epigram into Italian and Latin; in the latter language I was able to render La Fontaine almost line for line, but I had to use twenty lines of Italian to translate the first ten lines of the French. Of course this argues nothing as to the superiority of one language over the other.

In the best society in Naples one addresses a newcomer in the second person singular as a peculiar mark of distinction. This puts both parties at their ease without diminishing their mutual respect for one another.

Leonilda had already turned my first feeling of admiration into something much warmer, and the opera, which lasted for five hours, seemed over in a moment.

After the two ladies had gone, the duke said, "Now we must part, unless you are fond of games of chance."

"I don't object to them when I am to play with good hands."

"Then follow me; ten or twelve of my friends are going to play faro and then sit down to a cold collation, but I warn you it is a secret, as gaming is forbidden. I will answer for you keeping your own counsel, however."

"You may do so."

He took me to the Duke de Monte Leone's. We went up to the third floor, passed through a dozen rooms and at last reached the gamester's chamber. A polite-looking banker, with a bank of about four hundred sequins, had the cards in his hands. The duke introduced me as his friend and had me sit beside him. I was going to draw out my purse but was told that debts were not paid until twenty-four hours after they were due. The banker gave me a pack of cards with a little basket containing a thousand counters. I told the company that I should consider each counter as a Naples ducat. In less than two hours my basket was empty. I stopped playing and proceeded to enjoy my supper. It was arranged in the Neapolitan style and consisted of an enormous dish of macaroni and ten or twelve different kinds of shellfish, which are plentiful on the Neapolitan coast. When we left, I took care not to give the duke time to condole with me on my loss, but began to talk to him about his delicious Leonilda.

Early next day he sent a page to my room to tell me that, if I wanted to come with him and kiss the King's hand, I must put on my gala dress. I put on a suit of rose-coloured velvet with gold spangles and had the great honour of kissing a small hand, covered with chilblains, belonging to a boy of nine. The Prince de St Nicander brought up the young King to the best of his ability, but he was naturally a kindly, just and generous monarch; if he had had more dignity, he would have been an ideal king; but he was too unceremonious, and that, I think, is a defect in one destined to rule others.

I had the honour of sitting next the duchess at dinner and she deigned to say she had never seen a finer dress. "That's my way," I said, "of distracting attention from my face and figure." She smiled, and her politenesses to me during my stay were almost limited to these few words.

When we left the table, the duke took me to the apartment occupied by his uncle, Don Lelio, who recognised me directly. I kissed the venerable old man's hand and begged him to pardon me for the freaks of my youth. "It's eighteen years ago," said he to the duke, "since I chose M. Casanova as the companion of your studies." I delighted him by giving him a brief account of my adventures in Rome with Cardinal Acquaviva. As we went out, he begged me to come and see him often.

Towards the evening the duke said, "If you go to the opera bouffe, you will please Leonilda."

He gave me the number of her box and added, "I will come for you towards the close and we will sup together as before."

I had no need to order my horses to be put in, as there was always a carriage ready for me in the courtyard.

When I got to the theatre, the opera had begun. I presented myself to Leonilda, who received me with the pleasant words, "*Caro Don Giacomo, I am so pleased to see you again!*"

No doubt she did not like to *thou* me, but the expression of her eyes

and the tone of her voice were much better than the *tu*, which is often used lavishly in Naples.

The seductive features of this charming girl were not altogether unknown to me, but I could not recollect of what woman she reminded me. Leonilda was certainly a beauty and something superior to a beauty, if possible. She had splendid light-chestnut hair and her brilliant black eyes, shaded by thick lashes, seemed to hear and speak at the same time. But what ravished me still more was her expression and the exquisite appropriateness of the gestures with which she accompanied what she said. It seemed as if her tongue could not give speech to the thoughts which crowded her brain. She was naturally quick-witted and her intellect had been developed by an excellent education.

The conversation turned upon La Fontaine's epigram, of which I had recited only the first ten verses, as the rest is too licentious; and she said, "But I suppose it is only a poet's fancy, at which one could but smile."

"Possibly, but I did not care to wound your ears."

"You are very kind," said she, using the pleasant *tu*, "but all the same, I am not so thin-skinned, as I have a boudoir which the duke has had decorated with Chinese hangings showing couples in various amorous attitudes. We go there sometimes and I assure you that I do not experience the slightest sensation."

"That may be through a defect of temperament, for, whenever I see well painted voluptuous pictures, I feel on fire. I wonder that, while you and the duke look at them, you do not try to put some of them into practice."

"We have only friendship for one another."

"Let him believe it who will."

"I am sure he is a man, but I am unable to say whether he is able to give a woman any real proofs of his love."

"Yet he has a son."

"Yes, he has a child who calls him 'father,' but he himself confesses that he is able to show his manly powers only with his wife."

"That's all nonsense, for you are made to give birth to amorous desires and a man who could live with you without being able to possess you ought to cease to live."

"Do you really think so?"

"Dear Leonilda, if I were in the duke's place, I would show you what a man who really loves can do."

"*Caro* Don Giacomo, I am delighted to hear you love me, but you will soon forget me, as you are leaving Naples."

"Cursed be the gaming tables; but for them, we might spend some delightful evenings together."

"The duke told me that you lost a thousand ducats yesterday evening like a perfect gentleman. You must be very unlucky."

"Not always, but, when I play on a day in which I have fallen in love, I am sure to lose."

"You will win back your money this evening."

"This is the declaration day; I shall lose again."

"Then don't play."

"People would say I was afraid or that all my money was gone."

"I hope at all events that you will win sometimes and tell me of your good luck. Come and see me to-morrow with the duke."

The duke came in at that moment and asked if I had liked the opera. Leonilda answered for me, "We have been talking about love all the time, so we don't know what has been going on on the stage."

"You have done well."

"I trust you will bring M. Casanova to see me to-morrow morning, as I hope he will bring me news that he has won."

"It's my turn to deal this evening, dearest, but, whether he wins or loses, you shall see him to-morrow. You must invite us to stay to luncheon."

"I shall be delighted."

We kissed her hand and went to the same place as the night before. The company was waiting for the duke. There were twelve members of the club and they held the bank in turn. They said that this made the chances more equal; but I laughed at this opinion, as there is nothing more difficult to establish than equality between players.

The Duke de Matalone sat down, drew out his purse and his pocket-book and put two thousand ducats in the bank, begging pardon of the others for doubling the usual sum in favour of the stranger. The bank never exceeded a thousand ducats.

"Then," said I, "I will hazard two thousand ducats also and not more, for they say in Venice that a prudent player never risks more than he can win. Each of my counters will be equivalent to two ducats." So saying, I took ten notes of a hundred ducats each from my pocket and gave them to the previous evening's banker who had won them from me.

Play began, and, though I was prudent and risked my money only on a single card, in less than three hours my counters were all gone. I stopped playing, though I had still twenty-five thousand ducats; but I had said I would not risk more than two thousand and I was ashamed to go back on my word.

Though I have always felt losing my money, no one has ever seen me put out by it because my natural gaiety was heightened by art on such occasions and seemed more brilliant than ever. I have always found it a great advantage to be able to lose pleasantly.

I ate an excellent supper and my high spirits furnished me with such a fund of amusing conversation that all the table was in a roar. I even succeeded in dissipating the melancholy of the Duke de Matalone, who was in despair at having won such a sum from his friend and guest. He was afraid he had half ruined me and also that people might say he had entertained me only to win my money.

As we returned to the palace, the conversation was affectionate on his side and jovial on mine, but I could see he was in some trouble,

and I guessed what was the matter. He wanted to say that I could pay the money I owed him whenever I liked, but he was afraid of wounding my feelings; but, as soon as he got home, he wrote me a friendly note to the effect that, if I needed money, his banker would let me have as much as I required. I replied directly that I felt the generosity of his offer and, if I was in need of funds, would avail myself of it.

Early next morning I went to his room and, after an affectionate embrace, told him not to forget that we were going to breakfast with his fair mistress. We both put on greatcoats and went to Leonilda's pretty house.

We found her sitting up in bed, in informal but modest dress, with a dimity corset tied with red ribbons. She looked beautiful and her graceful posture added to her charms. She was reading Crébillon's *Le Sopha*. The Duke sat down at the bottom of the bed and I stood staring at her in speechless admiration, endeavouring to recall to my memory where I had seen such another face as hers. It seemed to me that I had loved a woman like her. This was the first time I had seen her without the deceitful glitter of candles. She laughed at my absent-mindedness and told me to sit down on a chair by her bedside.

The duke told her that I was quite pleased at having lost two thousand ducats to his bank, as the loss made me sure she loved me.

"*Caro mio* Don Giacomo, I am sorry to hear that! You would have done better not to play, for I should have loved you all the same and you would have been two thousand ducats better off."

"And I two thousand ducats worse off," said the duke, laughing.

"Never mind, dear Leonilda, I shall win this evening if you grant me some favour to-day. If you do not do so, I shall lose heart and you will mourn at my grave before long."

"Consider, dear Leonilda, what you can do for my friend."

"I don't see that I can do anything."

The duke told her to dress, that we might go and breakfast in the Chinese boudoir. She began at once and preserved a just mean in what she let us see and what she concealed, and thus set me in flames, though I was already captivated by her face, her wit and her charming manners. I cast an indiscreet glance towards her beautiful breast and thus added fuel to the fire. I confess that I obtained this satisfaction only by a species of larceny, but I could not have succeeded if she had not been well disposed towards me. I pretended to have seen nothing.

While dressing, she maintained with much ingenuity that a wise girl will be much more chary of her favours towards a man she loves than towards a man she does not love, because she would be afraid to lose the first, whereas she does not care about the second.

"It would not be so with me, charming Leonilda," said I.

"You are mistaken, I am sure."

The pictures with which the closet where we breakfasted was adorned

were admirable more from the colouring and the design than from the amorous combats which they represented.

"They don't make any impression on me," said the duke.

"It is the same with me," said I, "but I will not take the trouble of convincing you."

"That can't be," said he. "It's astonishing. You must be as impotent as I."

"If I wanted to controvert that assertion, one glance into Leonilda's eyes would be enough."

"Look at him, dearest Leonilda, that I may be convinced."

Leonilda looked tenderly at me, and her glance produced the result I had expected

It was a delightful breakfast, though we passed certain bounds which decency ought to have prescribed to us, but Leonilda was wonderfully innocent, considering her position. We ended the scene by mutual embraces and, when I took my burning lips from Leonilda's, I felt consumed with a fire which I could not conceal.

When we left, I told the duke I would see his mistress no more unless he would give her up to me, declaring that I would marry her and give her a dower of five thousand ducats.

"Speak to her and, if she consents, I will not oppose it. She herself will tell you what property she has."

I then went to dress for dinner. I found the duchess in the midst of a large circle and she told me kindly that she was very sorry to hear of my losses.

"Fortune is the most fickle of beings, but I don't complain of my loss—nay, when you speak thus, I love it and even think that you will make me win this evening."

"I hope so, but I am afraid not; you will have to contend against Monte Leone, who is usually very lucky."

In considering the matter after dinner, I determined in future to play with ready money and not on my word of honour, lest I should at any time be carried away by the excitement of play and induced to stake more than I possessed. I thought, too, that the banker might have his doubts after the two heavy losses I had sustained, and I confess that I was also actuated by the gambler's superstition that by making a change of any kind one makes his luck turn.

I spent four hours at the theatre in Leonilda's box, where I found her more gay and charming than I had seen her before.

"Dear Leonilda," I said, "the love I feel for you will suffer no delay and no rivals, not even the slightest inconstancy. I have told the duke that I am ready to marry you and will give you a dower of five thousand ducats."

"What did he say?"

"That I must ask you and that he would offer no opposition."

"Then we should leave Naples together."

"Directly, dearest, and thenceforth death alone would part us."

"We will talk of it to-morrow, dear Don Giacomo, and, if I can make you happy, I am sure you will do the same by me."

As she spoke these delightful words, the duke came in.

"Don Giacomo and I are talking of marrying," said she.

"Marriage, *mia carissima*," he replied, "ought to be well considered beforehand."

"Yes, when one has time; but my dear Giacomo cannot wait and we shall have plenty of time to think it over afterwards."

"As you are going to marry," said the duke, "you can put off your departure or return after the wedding."

"I can neither put it off nor return, my dear duke. We have made up our minds and, if we repent, we have plenty of time before us."

He laughed and said we could talk it over next day. I gave my future bride a kiss which she returned with ardour, and the duke and I went to the club, where we found the Duke de Monte Leone dealing.

"My lord," said I, "I am unlucky playing on my word of honour, so I hope you will allow me to stake money."

"Just as you please; it comes to the same thing, but don't trouble yourself. I have made a bank of four thousand ducats that you may be able to recoup yourself for your losses."

"Thanks, I promise to break it or to lose as much."

I drew out six thousand ducats, gave two thousand ducats to the Duke de Matalone and began to punt at a hundred ducats. After a short time the duke left the table and I finally succeeded in breaking the bank. I went back to the palace by myself and, when I told the duke of my victory the next day, he embraced me with tears of joy and advised me in future to stake only ready cash.

As the Princess de Vale was giving a great supper, there was no play that evening. This was some respite. We called on Leonilda and, putting off talking of our marriage till the day after, we spent the time in viewing the wonders of nature around Naples. In the evening I was taken by a friend to the princess's supper and saw all the highest nobility of the place.

Next morning the duke told me he had some business to do and I had better go and see Leonilda, and he would call for me later on. I went to Leonilda, but, as the duke did not put in an appearance, we could not settle anything about our marriage. I spent several hours with her, but I was obliged to obey her commands and could show myself amorous only in words. Before leaving, I repeated that it rested only with her to unite our lives by indissoluble ties and leave Naples almost immediately.

When I saw the duke, he said, "Well, Don Giacomo, you have spent all the morning with my mistress; do you still wish to marry her?"

"More than ever; what do you mean?"

"Nothing; and, as you have passed this trial to which I purposely subjected you, we will discuss your union to-morrow, and I hope you will make this charming woman happy, for she will be an excellent wife."

"I agree with you."

When we went to Monte Leone's in the evening, we saw a banker with a good deal of gold before him. The duke told me he was Don Marco Ottoboni. He was a fine-looking man, but he held the cards so closely together in his left hand that I could not see them. This did not inspire me with confidence, so I punted only one ducat at a time. I was persistently unlucky but lost only a score of ducats. After five or six deals the banker asked me politely why I staked such small sums against him.

"Because, when I can't see at least half the pack," I replied, "I am afraid of losing."

Some of the company laughed at my answer.

Next night I broke the bank held by the Prince de Cassaro, a pleasant and rich nobleman, who asked me to give him his revenge and invited me to supper at his pretty house at Posilipo, where he lived with a *virtuosa* of whom he had become amorous at Palermo. He also invited the Duke de Matalone and three or four other gentlemen. This was the only occasion on which I held the bank while I was at Naples, and I staked six thousand ducats after warning the prince that, as it was the eve of my departure, I should play only for ready money.

He lost ten thousand ducats and rose from the table only because he had no more money. Everybody left the room and I should have done the same if the prince's mistress had not owed me a hundred ducats. I continued to deal, in the hope that she would get her money back but, seeing that she still lost, I put down the cards and told her she might pay me in Rome. She was a handsome and agreeable woman but did not inspire me with any passions, no doubt because my mind was occupied with another; otherwise I should have drawn a sight draft and paid myself without meddling with her purse. It was two o'clock in the morning when I got to bed.

Both Leonilda and myself wished to see Caserta before leaving Naples and the duke sent us there in a carriage drawn by six mules, which went faster than most horses. Leonilda's governess accompanied us.

The day after we settled the particulars of our marriage in a conversation which lasted for two hours.

"Leonilda," began the duke, "has a mother, who lives at a short distance from here on an income of six hundred ducats, which I gave her for life in return for an estate she inherited from her husband, but Leonilda does not depend on her. She surrendered her daughter to me seven years ago and I gave her an annuity of five hundred ducats, which she will bring to you with all her diamonds and an extensive trousseau. Her mother gave her up to me entirely and I pledged my word of honour to get her a good husband. I have taken peculiar care of her education and, as her mind has developed, I have put her on her guard against all prejudices, with the exception of the one which bids a woman keep herself intact for her future husband.

You may rest assured that you are the first man whom Leonilda (who is like a daughter to me) has pressed to her heart."

I begged the duke to get the contract ready and to add to her dower the sum of five thousand ducats, which I would give him when the deed was signed.

"I will mortgage them," said he, "on a house which is worth double."

Then turning to Leonilda, who was shedding happy tears, he said, "I am going to send for your mother, who will be delighted to sign the settlement and make the acquaintance of your future husband."

The mother lived at the Marquis Galiani's, a day's journey from Naples. The duke said he would send a carriage for her the next day and we could all sup together the day after.

"The law business will be all done by then and we shall be able to go to the little church at Portici and the priest will marry you. Then we will take your mother to St. Agatha and dine with her and you can go your way with her maternal blessing."

This conclusion gave me an involuntary shudder and Leonilda fell fainting in the duke's arms. He called her "dear child," cared for her tenderly and brought her to herself.

We all had to wipe our eyes, as we were all equally affected.

Considering myself as a married man and under obligation to alter my way of living, I stopped playing. I had won more than fifteen thousand ducats and this sum, added to what I had before and Leonilda's dowry, should have sufficed for an honest livelihood.

Next day, as I was at supper with the duke and Leonilda, she said, "What will my mother say to-morrow evening when she sees you?"

"She will say that you are silly to marry a stranger whom you have known for only a week. Have you told her my name, my nationality, my social status and my age?"

"I wrote her as follows:

"Dear mamma—Come directly and sign my marriage contract with a gentleman introduced to me by the duke, with whom I shall be leaving for Rome on Monday next."

"My letter ran thus," said the duke:

"Come without delay and sign your daughter's marriage contract and give her your blessing. She has wisely chosen a husband old enough to be her father; he is a friend of mine."

"That's not true," cried Leonilda, rushing to my arms. "She will think you are really old, and I am sorry."

"Is your mother an elderly woman?"

"She's a charming woman," said the duke, "full of wit and not yet thirty-eight."

"What has she got to do with Galiani?"

"She is an intimate friend of the marchioness and lives with the family, but pays for her board."

Next morning, having some business with my banker to attend to, I told the duke I should not be able to see Leonilda till supper-time.

I got there at eight o'clock and found the three sitting in front of the fire.

"Here he is!" cried the duke.

As soon as the mother saw me, she screamed and fell nearly fainting on a chair. I looked at her fixedly for a minute and exclaimed:

"Donna Lucrezia! I am fortunate indeed!"

"Let us take breath, my dear friend. Come and sit by me. So you are going to marry my daughter, are you?"

I took a chair and guessed it all. My hair stood on end and I relapsed into a gloomy silence.

The stupefied astonishment of Leonilda and the duke cannot be described. They could see that Donna Lucrezia and I knew each other, but they could not get any farther. As for myself, as I pondered gloomily and compared Leonilda's age with the period at which I had been intimate with Lucrezia Castelli, I could see that it was quite possible that she might be my daughter; but I told myself that the mother could not be certain of the fact, as at the time she lived with her husband, who was very fond of her and scarcely fifty years of age. I could bear the suspense no longer, so, taking a light and begging Leonilda and the duke to excuse me, I asked Lucrezia to come into the next room with me.

As soon as she was seated, she drew me to her and said:

"Must I grieve my dear one whom I have loved so well? Leonilda is your daughter; I am certain of it. I always looked upon her as your daughter, and my husband knew it, but, far from being angry, he used to adore her. I will show you the register of her birth and you can calculate for yourself. My husband was in Rome and did not see me once, and my daughter did not come before her time. You must remember a letter which my mother must have given you, in which I told you I was with child. That was in January, 1744, and in six months my daughter will be seventeen. My late husband gave her the names of Leonilda Giacomina at the baptismal font and, when he played with her, he always called her by the latter name. This idea of your marrying her horrifies me, but I cannot oppose it, as I am ashamed to tell the reason. What do you think? Have you still the courage to marry her? You seem to hesitate. Have you taken any earnest of the marriage bed?"

"No, dear Lucrezia, your daughter is as pure as a lily."

"I breathe again."

"Ah, yes! but my heart is torn asunder."

"I am grieved to see you thus."

"She has no likeness to me."

"That proves nothing; she has taken after me. You are weeping, dearest; you will break my heart."

"Who would not weep in my place? I will send the duke to you; he must know all."

I left Lucrezia and begged the duke to go and talk with her. The affectionate Leonilda came and sat on my lap and asked me what

the dreadful mystery was. I was too much affected to be able to answer her; she kissed me and we began to weep. We remained thus sad and silent till the return of the duke and Donna Lucrezia, who was the only one to keep her head cool.

"Dear Leonilda," said she, "you must be let into the secret of this disagreeable mystery and your mother is the proper person to enlighten you. Do you remember what my late husband used to call you when he petted you?"

"He used to call me his charming Giacomina."

"That is M. Casanova's name; it is the name of your father. Go and kiss him; his blood flows in your veins; and, if he has been your lover, repent of the crime which was, happily, quite involuntary."

The scene was a pathetic one and we were all deeply moved. Leonilda clung to her mother's knees and, in a voice that struggled with sobs, exclaimed, "I have felt only what an affectionate daughter might feel for a father."

At this point silence fell upon us, a silence that was broken only by the sobs of the two women, who held each other tightly embraced, while the duke and I sat as motionless as two posts, our heads bent and our hands crossed, without as much as looking at each other.

Supper was served and we sat at table for three hours, talking sadly over this dramatic recognition, which had brought more grief than joy; and we departed at midnight, full of melancholy and hoping that we should be calmer on the morrow and able to take the only step that now remained to us.

As we were going away the duke made several observations on what moral philosophers call "prejudices." There is no philosopher who would maintain or even advance the thesis that the union of a father and daughter is horrible naturally, for it is entirely a social prejudice; but it is so widespread and education has graven it so deeply in our hearts that only a man whose heart is utterly depraved could trample it under foot. It is the result of respect for the laws; it keeps the social scheme together; in fact, it is no longer a prejudice, it is a principle.

I went to bed but, as usual, after the violent emotion I had undergone, I could not sleep. The rapid transition from carnal to paternal love cast my physical and mental faculties into such a state of excitement that I could scarcely withstand the fierce struggle that was taking place in my heart.

Towards morning I fell asleep for a short time and woke up feeling as exhausted as any lover who had been spending a long and voluptuous winter's night.

When I got up, I told the duke I intended to set out from Naples the next day, and he observed that, as everybody knew I was on the eve of my departure, this haste would make people talk.

"Come and have some broth with me," said he, "and from henceforth look upon this marriage project as one of the many pranks in which you have engaged. We will spend the three or four days pleas-

antly together and perhaps, when we have thought over all this for some time, we shall end by thinking it matter for mirth and not sadness. Believe me, the mother is as good as the daughter; recollection is often better than hope; console yourself with Lucrezia. I don't think you can see any difference between her present appearance and that of eighteen years ago, for I don't see how she can ever have been handsomer than she is now."

This remonstrance brought me to my senses. I felt that the best thing I could do would be to forget the illusion which had amused me for four or five days, and, as my self-esteem was not wounded it ought not to be a difficult task; but yet I was in love and unable to satisfy my love.

Love is not like merchandise, where one can substitute one thing for another when one cannot have what one wants. Love is a sentiment; only the object who has kindled the flame can soothe the heat thereof.

We went to call on my daughter, the duke in his usual mood, but I looking pale, depressed, weary and like a boy going to receive the rod. I was extremely surprised when I came into the room to find the mother and daughter quite gay, but this helped on my cure. Leonilda threw her arms round my neck calling me "dear papa," and kissing me with all a daughter's freedom. Donna Lucrezia stretched out her hand, addressing me as her "dear friend." I regarded her attentively and was forced to confess that the eighteen years that had passed had done little ill to her charms. There was the same sparkling glance, that fresh complexion, those perfect lines, those beautiful lips—in fine, all that had charmed my youthful eyes.

We lavished mute caresses on each other. Leonilda gave and received the tenderest kisses, without seeming to notice what desires she might cause to arise; no doubt she knew that, as her father, I should have strength to resist, and she was right. One gets used to everything, and I was ashamed to be sad any longer.

I told Donna Lucrezia of the curious welcome her sister had given me in Rome, and she went off into peals of laughter. We reminded each other of the night at Tivoli and these recollections softened our hearts. From these softened feelings to love is but a short step; but neither place nor time were convenient, so we pretended not to be thinking of it.

After a few moments of silence I told her that, if she cared to come to Rome with me to pay a visit to her sister Angélique, I would bring her back to Naples at the beginning of Lent. She promised to let me know on the following day whether she could come.

I sat between her and Leonilda at dinner; and, as I could no longer think of the daughter, it was natural that my old flame for Lucrezia should rekindle; and whether from the effect of her gaiety and beauty, or from my need of someone to love, or from the excellence of the wine, I found myself in love with her by the dessert and asked her to take the place which her daughter was to have filled.

"I will marry you," said I, "and we will all of us go to Rome on

Monday, for, since Leonilda is my daughter, I do not like to leave her in Naples."

At this the three guests looked at each other and said nothing. I did not repeat my proposal, but led the conversation to some other topic.

After dinner I felt sleepy and lay down on a bed and did not wake till eight o'clock when, to my surprise, I found that my only companion was Lucrezia, who was writing. She heard me stir, and came up to me and said affectionately, "My dear friend, you have slept for five hours; and, as I did not like to leave you alone, I would not go with the duke and our daughter to the opera."

The memory of former loves awakens when one is near the once beloved object and desires rapidly become irresistible if the beauty still remains. The lovers feel as if they were once more in possession of a blessing which belongs to them and of which they have been long deprived by unfortunate incidents. These were our feelings and without delay, without idle discussion and, above all, without false modesty, we abandoned ourselves to love, the only true source of nature.

At the first *entr'acte* I was the first to break the silence; and, if a man is anything of a wit, is he the less so at that delicious moment of repose which follows on an amorous victory?

"Once again, then," said I, "I am in this charming land which I entered the first time to the noise of the drum and the rattle of musket shots."

This remark made her laugh and recalled past events to her memory. We recollected with delight all the pleasures we had enjoyed at Testaccio, Frascati and Tivoli. We reminded each other of these events, only to make each other laugh; but with two lovers, what is laughter but a pretext for renewing the sweet sacrifice to the goddess of Cythera?

At the end of the second act, full of the enthusiasm of the fortunate lover, I said, "Let us be united for life; we are of the same age, we love each other, our means are sufficient for us, we may hope to live a happy life and die at the same moment."

"'Tis the darling wish of my heart," Lucrezia replied, "but let us stay in Naples and leave Leonilda to the duke. We will see company, find her a worthy husband and our happiness will be complete."

"I cannot live in Naples, dearest, and you know that your daughter intended to leave with me."

"My daughter! Say 'our daughter.' I see that you are still in love with her and do not wish to be considered her father."

"Alas, yes! But I am sure that, if I live with you, my passion for her will be stilled, but otherwise I cannot answer for myself. I shall flee, but flight will not bring me happiness. Leonilda charms me still more by her intelligence than by her beauty. I was sure that she loved me so well that I did not attempt to seduce her, lest thereby I should weaken my hold on her affections; and, as I wanted to make her happy, I wished to deserve her esteem. I longed to possess her, but in a lawful manner, so that our rights should have been equal. We have created an angel, Lucrezia, and I cannot imagine how the duke . . ."

"The duke is completely impotent. Do you see now how I was able to trust my daughter to his care?"

"Impotent? I always thought so myself, but he has a son."

"His wife might possibly be able to explain that mystery to you, but you may take it for granted that the poor duke will die a virgin in spite of himself; and he knows that as well as anybody."

"Do not let us say any more about it, but allow me to treat you as at Tivoli."

"Not just now, as I hear carriage wheels."

A moment after the door opened and Leonilda laughed heartily to see her mother in my arms, and threw herself upon us, covering us with kisses. The duke came in a little later and we supped together very merrily. He thought me the luckiest of men when I told him I was going to pass the night honourably with my wife and daughter; and he was right, for I was so at that moment.

As soon as the worthy man left us, we went to bed, but here I must draw a veil over the most voluptuous night I have ever spent. If I told all, I should wound chaste ears, and, besides, all the colours of the painter and all the phrases of the poet could not do justice to the delirium of pleasure, the ecstasy and the license which passed during the night, while two wax lights burnt dimly on the table, like candles before the shrine of a saint.

We did not leave the stage till long after the sun had risen. We were scarcely dressed when the duke arrived.

Leonilda gave him a vivid description of our nocturnal labours, but in his unhappy state of impotence he must have been thankful for his absence.

I was determined to start the next day, so as to be in Rome for the last week of the carnival, and I begged the duke to let me give Leonilda the five thousand ducats which would have been her dower if she had become my bride.

"As she is your daughter," said he, "she can and ought to accept this present from her father, if only as a dowry."

"Will you accept it, then, my dear Leonilda?"

"Yes, papa dear," she said, embracing me, "on condition that you will promise to come and see me again as soon as you hear of my marriage."

I promised to do so and I kept my word.

"As you are going to-morrow," said the duke, "I shall ask all the nobility of Naples to meet you at supper. In the meanwhile I leave you with your daughter; we shall see each other again at supper-time."

He went out and I dined with my wife and daughter in the best of spirits. I spent almost the whole afternoon with Leonilda, keeping within the bounds of decency—less, perhaps, out of respect to morality, than because of my labours of the night before. We did not kiss each other till the moment of parting and I could see that both mother and daughter were grieved to lose me.

After a careful toilette I went to supper and found an assembly

of a hundred of the very best people in Naples. The duchess was very agreeable and, when I kissed her hand to take leave, she said, "I hope, Don Giacomo, that you have had no unpleasantness during your short stay in Naples and that you will sometimes think of your visit with pleasure."

I answered that I would be able to recall my visit only with delight, after the kindness with which she had deigned to treat me that evening; and, in fact, my recollections of Naples were always of the happiest description.

After I had treated the duke's attendants with generosity, the poor nobleman, whom Fortune had favoured and whom Nature had deprived of the sweetest of all enjoyments, came with me to the door of my carriage and I went on my way.

CHAPTER 86

My Spaniard was going on before us on horseback and I was sleeping profoundly beside Don Ciccio Alfani in my comfortable carriage, drawn by four horses, when a violent shock aroused me. The carriage had been overturned on the highway at midnight beyond Francolisa and four miles from St. Agatha.

Alfani was beneath me and uttered piercing shrieks, for he thought he had broken his left arm. Le Duc rode back and told me that the postillions had taken flight, possibly to give notice of our mishap to highwaymen, who are very common in the States of the Church of the King of Naples.

I got out of the carriage easily enough, but poor old Alfani, who was unwieldy with fat, badly hurt and half dead with fright, could not extricate himself without assistance. It took us a quarter of an hour to get him free. The poor wretch amused me by the blasphemies which he mingled with prayers to his patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi.

I was not without experience of such accidents and was not at all hurt, for one's safety depends a good deal on the position one is in. Don Ciccio had probably hurt his arm by stretching it out just as the accident took place.

I took my sword, my musket and my horse pistols out of the carriage and made them and my pocket pistols ready, so as to offer a stiff resistance to the brigands if they came; and I then told Le Duc to take some money and ride off and see if he could bring some peasants to our assistance.

Don Ciccio groaned over the accident, but I, resolving to sell my money and my life dearly, made a rampart of the carriage and four horses and stood sentry, with my arms ready.

I then felt prepared for all hazards and was quite calm, but my unfortunate companion continued to pour forth his groans and prayers and blasphemies—for all that goes together in Naples as in Rome. I could do nothing but commiserate him; but, in spite of myself, I

could not help laughing, which seemed to vex the poor abbé, who looked for all the world like a dying dolphin, as he rested motionless against the bank. His distress may be imagined, when the nearest horse yielded to the call of nature and voided over the unfortunate man the contents of its bladder. There was nothing to be done and I could not help roaring with laughter.

Nevertheless, a strong northerly wind rendered our situation an extremely unpleasant one. At the slightest noise I cried, "Who goes there?" threatening to fire on anyone who dared approach. I spent two hours in this tragi-comic position, until at last Le Duc rode up and told me that a band of peasants, all armed and provided with lanterns, were approaching to our assistance.

In less than an hour the carriage, the horses and Alfani were seen to. I kept two of the country folk to serve as postillions and sent the others away well paid for the interruption of their sleep. I reached St. Agatha at daybreak and made the Devil's own noise at the door of the postmaster, calling for an attorney to take down my statement and threatening to have the postillions who had overturned and deserted me hanged.

A wheelwright inspected my coach and pronounced the axle-tree broken and told me I should have to remain for a day at least.

Don Ciccio, who stood in need of a surgeon's aid, went to see the Marquis Galiani, whom he knew, without telling me anything about it. However, the marquis came quickly to beg me to stay at his house till I could continue my journey. I accepted the invitation with great pleasure, and with this my ill humour, which was really only the result of my desire to make a fuss like a great man, evaporated.

The marquis ordered my carriage to be taken to his coach-house, took me by the arm and led me to his house. He was as learned as he was polite, and a perfect Neapolitan—*i.e.*, devoid of all ceremony. He had not the brilliant wit of his brother, whom I had known in Paris as secretary of embassy under the Count Cantillana Montdragon, but he possessed a well-ordered judgment, founded on the study and consideration of ancient and modern classics. Above all, he was a great mathematician and was then preparing an annotated edition of *Vitruvius*, which was afterwards published.

The marquis introduced me to his wife, whom I knew to be the intimate friend of my dear Lucrezia. There was something saint-like in her expression and to see her surrounded by her little children was like looking at a picture of the Holy Family.

Don Ciccio was put to bed directly and a surgeon sent for, who consoled him by saying that it was only a simple luxation and he would be well again in a few days.

At noon a carriage stopped at the door and Lucrezia got out. She embraced the marchioness and said to me in the most natural manner as we shook hands, "What happy chance brings you here, dear Don Giacomo?"

She told her friend that I was a friend of her late husband and

that she had recently met me again with great pleasure at the Duc de Matalone's.

After dinner, on finding myself alone with this charming woman, destined for love, I asked her if it were not possible for us to pass a happy night together, but she showed me that it was out of the question, and I had to yield. I renewed my offer to marry her.

"Buy an estate," said she, "in the kingdom of Naples and I will spend the remainder of my days with you, without asking a priest to give us his blessing unless we happen to have children."

I could not deny that Lucrezia spoke very sensibly and I could easily have bought land in Naples and lived comfortably on it, but the idea of binding myself down to one place was so contrary to my feelings that I had the good sense to prefer my vagabond life to all the advantages which our union would have given me, and I do not think Lucrezia altogether disapproved of my resolution.

After supper I took leave of everybody and set out at daybreak in order to get to Rome by the next day. I had only fifteen stages to do and the road was excellent.

As we were getting into Carillano, I saw one of the two-wheeled carriages, locally called *mantice*; two horses were being put into it, while my carriage required four. I got out and, on hearing myself called, turned round. I was not a little surprised to find that the occupants of the *mantice* were a young and pretty girl and Signora Diana, the Prince de Cassaro's mistress, who owed me three hundred ounces. She told me she was going to Rome and would be glad if we could make the journey together.

"We shall stop for the night at Piperno, shall we not?"

"No," said I, "I am afraid that can't be managed; I don't intend to break my journey."

"But you would get to Rome by to-morrow just the same."

"I know that, but I sleep better in my carriage than in the bad beds they give you in the inns."

"I dare not travel by night."

"Very well, madame, I have no doubt we shall see each other in Rome."

"You are a cruel man. You see I have only a stupid servant and a maid who is as timid as I am; besides, it is cold and my carriage is open. I will keep you company in yours."

"I really can't take you in, as all the available space is taken up by my old secretary, who broke his arm yesterday."

"Shall we dine together at Terracino? We could have a little talk."

"Certainly."

We made good cheer at this small town, which is the frontier of the States of the Church. We should not reach Piperno till far on in the night and the lady renewed and redoubled her efforts to keep me till daybreak; but, though young and pretty, she did not take my fancy; she was too fair and too fat. But her maid, who was a pretty brunette, with a delicious, rounded form and a sparkling eye, excited

all my feelings of desire. A vague hope of possessing her won me over and I ended by promising the signora to sup with her and not continue my journey without recommending her to the innkeeper's especial care.

When we got to Piperno, I succeeded in telling the pretty maid that, if she would let me come to her quietly, I would not travel any further. She promised to wait for me and allowed me to take such liberties as are usually the signs of perfect complaisance.

We had supper and I wished the ladies good night and escorted them to their rooms, where I took note of the relative positions of their beds, so that there should be no mistake. I left them and came back in a quarter of an hour. Finding the door open, I felt sure of success and got into bed; but, as I found out, it was the signora and not the maid who received me. Evidently the little hussy had told her mistress the story and the mistress had thought fit to take the maid's place. There was no possibility of my being mistaken, for, though I could not see, I could feel.

For a moment I was undecided—should I remain in bed and make the best of what I had got or go on my way to Rome immediately? The latter counsel prevailed. I called Le Duc, gave my orders and started, enjoying the thought of the embarrassment of the two tricky women, who must have been in a great rage at the failure of their plans. I saw Signora Diana three or four times in Rome at a distance and we bowed without speaking; if I had thought it likely she would pay me the four hundred louis she owed me, I might have taken the trouble to call on her, but I know that your stage queens are the worst debtors in the world.

My brother, the Chevalier Mengs and the Abbé Winckelmann were all in good health and spirits. Costa was delighted to see me again. I sent him off directly to His Holiness's *scopatore maggiore*, to warn him that I was coming to take polenta with him and all he need do was to get a good supper for twelve. I was sure of finding Mariuccia there, for I knew Momolo had noticed that her society pleased me.

The carnival began the day after my arrival and I hired a superb landau for the whole week. The Roman landaus seat four people and have a hood which may be lowered at pleasure. In these landaus one drives along the Corso with or without masks from nine to twelve o'clock during the carnival time.

From time immemorial the Corso at Rome has presented a strange and diverting spectacle during the carnival. The horses start from the Piazza del Popolo and gallop along to the Column of Trajan between two lines of carriages drawn up beside two narrow sidewalks crowded with maskers and people of all classes. All the windows are decorated. As soon as the horses have passed, the carriages begin to move slowly and the maskers on foot and horseback occupy the middle of the street. The air is full of real and false sweetmeats, pamphlets, pasquinades and puns. Throughout the mob, composed of the best and the worst classes in Rome, liberty reigns supreme and, when twelve o'clock is announced by the third report of the cannon of St. Angelo, the Corso

begins to clear and in five minutes you would look in vain for a carriage or a masker. The crowd disperses into the neighbouring streets and fills the opera houses, the theatres, the rope-dancers' exhibitions and even the puppet shows. The restaurants and taverns are not left desolate; everywhere you will find crowds of people, for during the carnival the Romans think only of eating, drinking and enjoying themselves.

I banked my money with M. Belloni and got a letter of credit on Turin, where I expected to find the Abbé Gama and receive a commission to represent the Portuguese Court at the Congress of Augsburg, to which all Europe was looking forward; then I went to inspect my little room, where I hoped to meet Mariuccia the next day. I found everything in good order.

In the evening Momolo and his family received me with joyful exclamations. The eldest daughter said, with a smile, that she was sure she would please me by sending for Mariuccia.

"You are right," said I, "I shall be delighted to see the fair Mariuccia."

A few minutes after Maria entered with her puritanical mother, who told me I must not be surprised to see her daughter better dressed, as she was going to be married in a few days. I congratulated her and Momolo's daughters asked who was the happy man. Mariuccia blushed and said modestly to one of them, "It is somebody you know—So-and-So; he met me here and is going to open a hairdresser's shop."

"The marriage was arranged by good Father St. Barnabas," added the mother. "He has in his keeping my daughter's dower of four hundred Roman crowns."

"He's a good lad," said Momolo. "I have a high opinion of him; he would have married one of my daughters if I could have given him such a dowry."

At these words the girl in question blushed and lowered her eyes.

"Never mind, my dear," said I, "your turn will come in time."

She took my words as seriously meant and her face lit up with joy. She thought I had guessed her love for Costa, and her idea was confirmed when I told him to get my landau the next day and take out all Momolo's daughters, well masked, as it would not do for them to be recognised in a carriage I meant to make use of myself. I also bade him hire some handsome costumes from a Jew and I would pay the rental myself. This put them all in a good humour.

"How about Signora Maria?" said the jealous sister.

"As Signora Maria is going to be married," I replied, "she must not be present at any festivity without her future husband."

The mother applauded this decision of mine and sly Mariuccia pretended to feel mortified. I turned to Momolo and begged him to ask Mariuccia's future husband to meet me at supper, by which I pleased her mother greatly.

I felt very tired and, having nothing to keep me after having seen

Mariuccia, I begged the company to excuse me and, after wishing them a good appetite, I left them.

I walked out next morning at an early hour, I had no need of going into the church, which I reached at seven o'clock, for Mariuccia saw me at some distance off and followed me and we were soon alone together in the little room, which love and voluptuous pleasure had transmuted into a sumptuous palace. We would gladly have given some time to sweet converse, but we had only an hour before us. . . . After the last kiss, she told me that she was to be married on the eve of Shrove Tuesday and that all had been arranged by her confessor. She also thanked me for having asked Momolo to invite her intended.

"When shall we see each other again, my angel?"

"On Sunday, the eve of my wedding; we shall be able to spend four hours together."

"Delightful! I promise you that, when you leave me, you will be in such a state that the caresses of your husband won't hurt you."

She smiled and departed and I threw myself on the bed, where I rested for a good hour.

As I was going home, I met a coach and four going at a great speed. A footman rode in front of the carriage and within it I saw a young nobleman. My attention was arrested by the blue ribbon on his breast. I gazed at him and he called out my name and had the carriage stopped. I was extremely surprised when I found it was Lord O'Callaghan, whom I had known in Paris at the home of his mother, the Countess of Lismore, who was separated from her husband and was the kept mistress of M. de St. Aubin, the unworthy successor of the good and virtuous Fénelon in the archbishopric of Cambrai. However, the archbishop owed his promotion to the fact that he was a bastard of the Duc d'Orléans, the French Regent.

Lord O'Callaghan was a fine-looking young man, with wit and talent, but the slave of his unbridled passions and of every species of vice. I knew that, if he were lord in name, he was not so in fortune, and I was astonished to see him driving such a handsome carriage and still more so at his blue ribbon. In a few words he told me that he was going to dine with the Pretender but would sup at home. He invited me to come to supper and I accepted. After dinner I took a short walk and then went to enliven myself at the theatre, where I saw Momolo's girls strutting about with Costa; afterwards I went to Lord O'Callaghan's and was pleasantly surprised to meet the poet Poinsinet. He was young, short, ugly, full of poetic fire, a wit and a dramatist. Five or six years later the poor fellow fell into the Guadalquivir and was drowned; he had gone to Madrid in the hope of making his fortune. As I had known him in Paris, I addressed him as an old acquaintance.

"What are you doing in Rome? Where's my Lord O'Callaghan?"

"He's in the next room, but, as his father is dead, his title is now Earl of Lismore. You know he was an adherent of the Pretender's. I left Paris with him, well enough pleased at being able to come to Rome without its costing me anything."

"Then the earl is a rich man now?"

"Not exactly, but he will be, as he is his father's heir and the old earl left an immense fortune. It is true that it is all confiscated, but that is nothing, as his claims are irresistible."

"In short, he is rich in claims and rich in the future, but how did he get himself made a knight of one of the French king's orders?"

"You're joking. That is the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Michael, of which the late Elector of Cologne was grand master. As you know, my lord plays exquisitely on the violin and, when he was in Bonn, he played for the Elector a concerto by Tartini. The prince could not find words in which to express his pleasure over my lord's performance and he gave him the ribbon you have seen."

"A fine present, doubtless."

"You don't know what pleasure it gave my lord, for, when we go back to Paris, everybody will take it for the Order of the Holy Ghost."

We passed into a large room, where we found the earl with the party he had asked to supper. As soon as he saw me, he embraced me, called me his "dear friend" and presented his guests to me. There were seven or eight girls, all of them pretty, three or four *castrati* who played women's parts in the Roman theatres, and five or six abbés (a husband to any wife and a wife to any husband) who boasted of their wickedness and challenged the girls to be more shameless than they. The girls were not common courtesans, but past mistresses of music, painting and vice considered as a fine art. The kind of society may be imagined when I say that I found myself a perfect novice amongst them.

"Where are you going, prince?" said the earl to a respectable-looking man who was making for the door.

"I don't feel well, my lord. I must go out."

"What prince is that?" said I.

"The Prince de Chimai. He is sub-deacon and is endeavouring to gain permission to marry, lest his family become extinct."

"I admire his prudence or his delicacy, but I am afraid I should not imitate him."

There were twenty-four of us at table and it is no exaggeration to say that we emptied a hundred bottles of the choicest wines. Everybody was drunk, with the exception of myself and the poet Poinset, who had taken nothing but water. The company rose from table and then began a foul orgy which I should never have conceived possible and which no pen could describe, though possibly a seasoned profligate might get some idea of it.

A *castrato* and a girl of almost equal height proposed to strip in an adjoining room and lie on their backs in the same bed with their faces covered. They challenged us all to guess which was which.

We all went in and nobody could pronounce from sight which was male and which was female, so I bet the earl fifty crowns that I would point out the woman. He accepted the wager and I guessed correctly, but payment was out of the question.

This vile debauch disgusted me and yet gave me a better knowledge of myself. I could not help confessing that my life had been endangered, for I had only my sword, but I should certainly have used it if the earl had tried to treat me like the others and as he treated poor Poinset. I never understood how it was that he respected me, for he was quite drunk and in a kind of Bacchic fury.

As I left, I promised to come and see him as often as he pleased, but I made up my mind never to set foot in his house again.

Next day he came to see me in the afternoon and asked me to walk with him to the Villa Medici.

I complimented him on the immense wealth he had inherited to enable him to live so splendidly, but he laughed and told me that he did not possess fifty piastres, that his father had left nothing but debts and he himself already owed three or four thousand crowns.

"I wonder people give you credit, then."

"They give me credit because everybody knows that I have drawn a bill of exchange on Paris to the tune of two hundred thousand francs. But in four or five days the bill will be returned protested and I am only waiting till that happens to make my escape."

"If you are certain of its being protested, I advise you to make your escape to-day; for, as it is so large a sum, it may be taken up before it is due."

"No, I won't do that; I have one hope left. I have written to tell my mother that I shall be undone if she does not furnish the banker, on whom I have drawn the bill, with sufficient funds, if she does that, the bill will be accepted. You know my mother is very fond of me."

"Yes, but I also know that she is far from being rich."

"True, but M. de St. Aubin is rich enough and, between you and me, I think he is my father. Meanwhile, my creditors are almost as calm as I am. All those girls you saw yesterday would give me all they have if I asked them, as they are all expecting me to make them a handsome present in the course of the week, but I won't abuse their trust in me. But one whom I shall be obliged to cheat is the Jew who wants to sell me this ring for three thousand sequins, whereas I know it is worth only one thousand."

"He will send the police after you."

"I defy him to try it."

The ring was set with a straw-coloured diamond of nine of ten carats. He begged me to keep his secret as we parted. I did not feel any sentiments of pity for this extravagant madman, as I saw in him a man unfortunate only by his own fault, whose fate would probably make him end his days in a prison, unless he had the courage to blow his brains out.

I went to Momolo's in the evening and found the intended husband of my fair Mariuccia there, but not the lady herself. I heard she had sent word to the *scopatore santissimo* that, as her father had come from Palestrina to be present at her wedding, she could not come to supper.

I admired her subtlety. A young girl has no need of being instructed in diplomacy where her heart is involved; Nature points the way and she follows safely. At supper I studied the young man and found him eminently suitable for Mariuccia; he was handsome, modest and intelligent and whatever he said was spoken frankly and to the point.

He told me before Momolo's daughter, Tecla, that he would have married her if she had possessed means to enable him to open his shop, and that he had reason to thank God for having met Maria, whose confessor had been such a true spiritual father to her. I asked him where the wedding festivities were to take place, and he told me they were to be at his father's house on the other side of the Tiber. As his father, who kept a garden, was poor, the son had furnished him with ten crowns to defray the expenses.

I wanted to give him ten crowns, but how was I to do it? It would have betrayed me.

"Is your father's garden a pretty one?" I asked.

"Not exactly pretty, but very well kept. As he owns the land, he has set apart a plot which he wants to sell; it would bring in twenty crowns a year and I should be as happy as a cardinal if I could buy it."

"How much would it cost?"

"It's a heavy price—two hundred crowns."

"Why, that's cheap! Listen to me. I have met your future bride at this house and have found her in all ways worthy of happiness. She deserves an honest young fellow like you for a husband. Now what would you do, supposing I were to make you a present of two hundred crowns to buy the garden?"

"I should put it to my wife's dowry."

"Then here are the two hundred crowns. I shall give them to Momolo, as I don't know you well enough, though I think you are perfectly to be trusted. The garden is yours, as part of your wife's dowry."

Momolo took the money and promised to buy the garden the following day, and the young man, shedding tears of joy and gratitude, fell on his knees and kissed my hand. All the girls wept, as I myself did, for there's a contagion in such happy tears. Nevertheless, they did not all proceed from the same source; some were virtuous and some vicious and the young man's were the only ones whose source was pure and unalloyed. I raised him from the ground, kissed him and wished him a happy marriage. He made bold to ask me to his wedding, but I refused, thanking him kindly. I told him that, if he wanted to please me, he would come and sup at Momolo's on the eve of his wedding, and I begged the good *scopatore* to ask Mariuccia, her father and mother as well. I was sure of seeing her for the last time on the Sunday morning.

At seven o'clock on the Sunday morning we were in each other's arms, with four hours before us. After the first burst of mutual ardour she told me that all arrangements had been made in her house the evening before, in the presence of her confessor and of Momolo, and

that, on the receipt for the two hundred crowns being handed in, the notary had put the garden into the settlement, and that the good priest had made her a present of twenty piastres towards defraying the notary's fees and the wedding expenses.

"Everything is for the best and I am sure I shall be happy. My intended adores you, but you did wisely not to accept his invitation, for you would have found yourself in very humble surroundings and, besides, tongues might have been set wagging to my disadvantage."

"You are quite right, dearest, but what do you intend to do if your husband finds that the door has been opened by someone else, for possibly he expects you to be a maid."

"I expect he will know no more about it than I did the first time you knew me; besides, I do not feel that you have defiled me and my clean conscience will not allow me to think of the matter; and I am sure he will not think of it any more than I."

"Yes, but if he does?"

"It would not be delicate on his part, but what should prevent me from replying that I don't know what he means?"

"You are right; that's the best way. But have you told your confessor of our mutual enjoyment?"

"No, for, as I did not give myself up to you with any criminal intention, I do not think I have offended God."

"You are an angel and I admire the clearness of your reasoning. But listen to me; it's possible that you are already with child or that you may become so this morning; promise to name the child after me."

"I will do so."

The four hours sped rapidly away. After the fourth hour we were wearied, though not satiated. We parted with tears and swore to love each other as brother and sister ever after.

I went home, bathed, slept an hour, rose, dressed and dined pleasantly with the family. In the evening I took the Mengs family for a drive in my landau and we then went to the theatre, where the *castrato* who played the prima donna was a great attraction. He was the favourite pathic of Cardinal Borghese and supped every evening with His Eminence.

This *castrato* had a fine voice, but his chief attraction was his beauty. I had seen him in man's clothes in the street but, though a fine-looking fellow, he had not made any impression on me, for one could see at once that he was only half a man; but on the stage in woman's dress the illusion was complete; he was ravishing, a nymph, and, incredible though it may seem, his breast was as beautiful as any woman's; it was the monster's chiefest charm. However well one knew the fellow's neutral sex, as soon as one looked at his breast, one felt all aglow and quite madly amorous of him. To feel nothing, one would have to be as cold and impassive as a German. As he walked the boards, waiting for the refrain of the air he was singing, there was something grandly voluptuous about him; and, as he glanced towards the boxes, his black eyes, at once tender and modest, ravished the heart. He evidently

wished to fan the flames of those who loved him as a man but probably would not have cared for him if he had been a woman.

Rome the Holy, which thus strives to make all men pederasts, denies the fact and will not believe in the effects of the glamour of her own devising.

I made these reflections aloud and an ecclesiastic, wishing to blind me to the truth, spoke as follows:

"You are quite right. Why should this *castrato* be allowed to show his breast, of which the fairest Roman lady might be proud, and yet wish everyone to consider him as a man and not a woman? If the stage is forbidden to the fair sex, lest they excite desires, why do they seek out male monsters made in the form of women, who excite much more criminal desires? They keep on preaching that pederasty is comparatively unknown and entraps only a few, but many clever men pursue the lure and end by finding it so pleasant that they prefer these monsters to the most beautiful women."

"The Pope would be sure of Heaven if he put a stop to this scandalous practice."

"I don't agree with you. One could not have a pretty actress to supper without causing a scandal, but such an invitation to a *castrato* makes nobody talk. It is of course known perfectly well that after supper both heads rest on one pillow, but what everybody knows is known to none. One may sleep with a man out of mere friendship; it is not so with a woman."

"True, monsignor, appearances are saved, and a sin concealed is half pardoned, as they say in Paris."

"At Rome we say it is pardoned altogether. *Peccato nascosto non offende.*"

His Jesuitical arguments interested me, for I knew that he was an avowed partisan of the forbidden fruit.

In one of the boxes I saw the Marchioness Passanini (whom I had known in Dresden) with Don Antonio Borghese and I went to pay my addresses to them. The prince, whom I had known in Paris ten years before, recognised me and asked me to dine with him on the following day. I went but my lord was not at home. A page told me that my place was laid at table and that I could dine just as if the prince were there, on which I turned my back on him and went away. On Ash Wednesday he sent his man to ask me to sup with him and the marchioness, who was his mistress, and I sent word that I would not fail to come; but he waited for me in vain. Pride is the daughter of folly and always keeps its mother's nature.

After the opera I went to Momolo's, where I found Mariuccia, her father, her mother and her future husband. They were anxiously awaiting me. It is not difficult to make people happy when one selects for one's bounty persons who really deserve happiness. I was amidst poor but honest people and I can truly say that I had a delightful supper. It may be that some of my enjoyment proceeded from a feeling of vanity, for I knew that I was the author of the happiness depicted on

the faces of the bride and bridegroom and of Mariuccia's father and mother; but, when vanity causes good deeds, it is a virtue. Nevertheless, I owe it to myself to tell my readers that my pleasure was too pure to have in it any admixture of vice.

After supper I made a small bank at faro, making everybody play with counters, as nobody had a penny, and I was so fortunate as to make everyone win a few ducats.

After the game we danced in spite of the prohibition of the Pope, whom no Roman can believe to be infallible, for he forbids dancing and yet permits games of chance. His successor, Ganganelli, followed the opposite course and was no better obeyed. To avoid suspicion, I did not give the pair any present, but I gave up my landau to them that they might enjoy the carnival on the Corso and I told Costa to get them a box at the Capranica Theatre. Momolo asked me to supper on Shrove Tuesday.

I wished to leave Rome on the second day of Lent and I called on the Holy Father at an hour when all Rome was on the Corso. His Holiness welcomed me most graciously and said he was surprised that I had not gone to see the sights on the Corso like everybody else. I replied that, as a lover of pleasure, I had chosen the greatest pleasure of all for a Christian—namely, to kneel at the feet of the vicar of Christ on earth. He bowed with a kind of majestic humility, which showed me how the compliment had pleased him. He kept me for more than an hour, talking about Venice, Padua and Paris, which latter city the worthy man would not have been sorry to visit. I again commended myself to his apostolic intercession to enable me to return to my native country and he replied, "Have recourse to God, dear son, His grace will be more efficacious than my prayers." And then he blessed me and wished me a prosperous journey.

I saw that the Head of the Church had no great opinion of his own power.

On Shrove Tuesday I dressed myself richly in the costume of Polichinello and rode along the Corso, showering sweetmeats on all the pretty women I saw. Finally I emptied the basket on the daughters of the worthy *scopatore*, whom Costa was taking about in my landau with all the dignity of a pasha.

At night-time I took off my costume and went to Momolo's, where I expected to see dear Mariuccia for the last time. Supper passed off in a manner almost similar to the supper of the previous Sunday; but there was an interesting novelty for me, the sight of my beloved mistress in her character of bride. Her husband seemed to be much more reserved with respect to me than at our first meeting. I was puzzled by his behaviour and sat down by Mariuccia and proceeded to question her. She told me all the circumstances which had passed on the first night and spoke highly of her husband's good qualities. He was kind, amorous, good-tempered and delicate. No doubt he must have noticed that the casket had been opened, but he had said nothing about it. When he mentioned me, she had not been able to resist the pleasure of

telling him that I was her sole benefactor, at which, so far from being offended, he seemed to trust in her more than ever.

"But did he not question you indirectly as to the connection between us?"

"Not at all. I told him that you went to my confessor after having spoken to me only once in church, where I had told you what a good chance I had of being married to him."

"Do you think he believed you?"

"I am not sure; however, even if it were otherwise, it is enough that he pretends to, for I am determined to win his esteem."

"You are right and I think all the better of him for his suspicions, for it is better to marry a man with some sense in his head than to marry a fool."

I was so pleased with what she told me that, when I took leave of the company, I embraced the hairdresser and, drawing a handsome gold watch from my fob, I begged him to accept it as a souvenir of me. He received it with the utmost gratitude. From my pocket I took a ring, worth at least six hundred francs, and put it on his wife's finger, wishing them a fair posterity and all manner of happiness, and I then went home to bed, telling Le Duc and Costa that we must begin to pack up next day.

I was just getting up when they brought me a note from Lord Lisimore, begging me to come and speak to him at noon at the Villa Borghese.

I had some suspicion of what he might want, but kept the appointment I felt in a mood to give him some good advice. Indeed, considering the friendship between his mother and myself, it was my duty to do so.

He came up to me and gave me a letter he had received the evening before from his mother. She told him that Paris de Montmartel had just informed her that he was in possession of a bill for two hundred thousand francs drawn by her son and that he would honour it if she would furnish him with the funds. She had replied that she would let him know in two or three days if she could do so, but she warned her son that she had asked for this delay only to give him time to escape, as the bill would certainly be protested and returned, it being absolutely out of the question for her to get the money.

"You had better make yourself scarce as soon as you can," said I, returning him the letter.

"Buy this ring and so furnish me with the means for my escape. You would not know that it was not my property if I had not told you so in confidence."

I made an appointment with him and had the stone taken out and valued by one of the best jewellers in Rome.

"I know this stone," said he. "It is worth two thousand Roman crowns."

At four o'clock I took the earl five hundred crowns in gold and

fifteen hundred crowns in paper, which he would have to take to a banker, who would give him a bill of exchange on Amsterdam.

"I will be off at nightfall," said he, "and travel by myself to Amsterdam, taking only such effects as are absolutely necessary, and my beloved blue ribbon."

"A pleasant journey to you," said I, and left him. In ten days I had the stone mounted in Bologna.

I got a letter of introduction from Cardinal Albani for Onorati, the nuncio at Florence, and another letter from M. Mengs to Sir Mann, whom he begged to receive me in his house. I was going to Florence for the sake of the Corticelli and my dear Thérèse and I reckoned on the auditor's feigning not to know of my return, in spite of his unjust order, especially if I were residing at the English minister's.

On the second day of Lent the disappearance of Lord Lismore was the talk of the town. The English tailor was ruined, the Jew who owned the ring was in despair and all the silly fellow's servants were turned out of the house almost in a state of nakedness, as the tailor had unceremoniously taken possession of everything in the way of clothes that he could lay his hands on.

Poor Poinset came to see me in a pitiable condition; he had only his shirt and overcoat. He had been despoiled of everything and threatened with imprisonment. "I haven't a farthing," said the poor child of the Muses. "I have only the shirt on my back. I know nobody here and I think I shall go and throw myself into the Tiber."

He was destined to be drowned, not in the Tiber but in the Guadalquivir. I calmed him by offering to take him to Florence with me, but I warned him that I must leave him there, as someone was awaiting me in Florence. He immediately took up his abode with me and wrote verses incessantly till it was time to go.

My brother Jean made me a present of an onyx of great beauty. It was a cameo representing Venus bathing, and a genuine antique, as the name of the artist, Sostrates, was cut on the stone. Two years later I sold it to Dr. Masti in London for three hundred pounds and it is possibly still in the British Museum.

I went my way with Poinset, who amused me, in spite of his sadness, with his droll fancies. In two days I got down at the door of Dr. Vannini, who tried to conceal his surprise at seeing me. I lost no time but waited on Sir Mann immediately and found him sitting at table. He gave me a very friendly reception but seemed alarmed when, in reply to his question, I told him that my dispute with the auditor had not been arranged. He told me plainly that he thought I had made a mistake in returning to Florence and that he would be compromised by my staying with him. I pointed out that I was only passing through Florence.

"That's all very well," said he, "but you know you ought to call on the auditor."

I promised to do so and returned to my lodging. I had scarcely shut the door when an agent of police came and told me that the auditor

had something to say to me and would be glad to see me at an early hour next morning.

I was enraged at this order and determined to start forthwith rather than obey. Full of this idea, I called on Thérèse and found she was at Pisa. I then went to see the Corticelli, who threw her arms round my neck and made use of the Bolognese grimaces appropriate to the occasion. To speak the truth, although the girl was pretty, her chief merit in my eyes was that she made me laugh. I gave some money to her mother to get us a good supper and took the girl out under pretence of going for a walk. I went with her to my lodging and left her with Poinset, and, going to another room, I summoned Costa and Vannini. I told Costa in Vannini's presence to go on with Le Duc and my luggage the following day and to call for me at 'The Pilgrim' in Bologna. I gave Vannini my instructions and he left the room, and then I ordered Costa to leave Florence with Signora Laura and her son and to tell them that I and the daughter had gone on ahead. Le Duc received similar orders and, calling Poinset, I gave him ten louis and begged him to look out for some other lodging that very evening. The worthy but unfortunate young man wept grateful tears and told me that he would set out for Parma on foot next day, and that there M. Tillot would do something for him.

I went back to the next room and told the Corticelli to come with me. She did so, under the impression that we were going back to her mother's, but, without taking the trouble to undeceive her, I had a carriage and pair got ready and told the postillion to drive to Uccelatoio, the first post on the Bologna road.

"Where in the world are we going?" said she.

"To Bologna."

"How about mamma?"

"She will come on to-morrow."

"Does she know about it?"

"No, but she will to-morrow when Costa comes to tell her and to fetch her and your brother."

She liked the joke and got into the carriage laughing and we drove away.

CHAPTER 87

THE Corticelli had a good warm mantle, but the fool who was carrying her off had no cloak, even of the most meagre kind, to keep off the piercing cold, which was increased by a keen wind blowing right in our faces.

In spite of all, I would not halt, for I was afraid I might be pursued and obliged to return, which would have greatly vexed me.

When I saw that the postillion was slackening his speed, I increased the amount of the present I promised to make him, and once more we rushed along at a headlong pace. I felt perishing with the cold, while the postillions, seeing me so lightly clad and so prodigal of my money

to speed them on their way, imagined I was a prince carrying off the heiress of some noble family. We heard them talking to this effect while they changed horses and the Corticelli was so much amused that she did nothing but laugh for the rest of the way. In five hours we covered forty miles; we started from Florence at eight o'clock and at one in the morning we stopped at a post in the Pope's territory, where I had nothing to fear. The posting-house goes under the name of The Ass Unburdened.

The odd name of the inn made my mistress laugh afresh. Everybody was asleep, but the noise I made and the distribution of a few paoli procured me the privilege of a fire. I was dying of hunger and they coolly told me there was nothing to eat. I laughed in the landlord's face and told him to bring me his butter, his eggs, his macaroni, a ham and some Parmesan cheese, for I knew that so much will be found in the inns all over Italy. The repast was soon ready and I showed the idiot host that he had materials for an excellent meal. We ate like four and afterwards they made up an impromptu bed and we went to sleep, telling them to call us as soon as a carriage and four drew up.

Full of ham and macaroni, slightly warmed with the Chianti and Montepulciano and tired with our journey, we stood more in need of slumber than of love and so we gave ourselves up to sleep till morning. Then we gave a few moments to pleasure, but it was so slight an affair as not to be worth talking about.

At one o'clock we began to feel hungry again and got up, and the host provided us with an excellent dinner, after receiving instructions from me. I was astonished not to see the carriage draw up, but I waited patiently all day. Night came on and still no coach and I began to feel anxious; but the Corticelli persisted in laughing at everything. Next morning I sent off an express messenger with instructions for Costa. In the event of any violence having taken place, I was resolved to return to Florence, of which city I could at any time make myself free by the expenditure of two hundred crowns.

The messenger started at noon and returned at two o'clock with the news that my servants would shortly be with me. My coach was on its way and behind it a smaller carriage with two horses, in which sat an old woman and a young man.

"That's my mother," said the Corticelli. "Now we shall have some fun. Let's get something for them to eat and be ready to hear the history of this marvellous adventure, which she will remember to her dying day."

Costa told me that the auditor had revenged my contempt of his orders by forbidding the post authorities to furnish any horses for my carriage—hence the delay. But now let us hear the allocution of Signora Laura:

"I got an excellent supper ready," she began, "according to your orders; it cost me more than ten paoli, as I shall show you, and I hope you will make it up to me, as I'm but a poor woman. All was ready and I was joyfully awaiting you, but in vain. I was in despair. At last,

when midnight came, I sent my son to your lodging to inquire after you, but you may imagine my grief when I heard that nobody knew what had become of you. I passed a sleepless night, weeping all the time, and in the morning I went and complained to the police that you had taken off my daughter, and asked them to send after you and make you give her back to me. But only think, they laughed at me! 'Why did you let her go out without you?' says one, laughing in my face. 'Your daughter's in good hands,' says another. 'You know perfectly well where she is.' In fact I was grossly slandered."

"Slandered?" said the Corticelli.

"Yes, slandered, for it was as much as to say that I had consented to your being carried off and, if I had done that, the fools might have known I would not have come to them about it. I went away in a rage to Dr. Vannini's, where I found your man, who told me you had gone to Bologna and I could follow you if I liked. I consented to this plan and I hope you will pay my travelling expenses. But I can't help telling you that this is rather beyond a joke."

I consoled her by telling her I would pay all she had spent, and we set off for Bologna the next day and reached that town at an early hour. I sent my servants to the inn with my carriage and I went to lodge with the Corticelli.

I spent a week with the girl, getting my meals from the inn and enjoying a diversity of pleasures which I shall remember all my days; my young wanton had a large circle of female friends, all pretty and all kind. I lived with them like a sultan and I still delight to recall this happy time and I say with a sigh, "*Tempi passati!*" There are many towns in Italy where one can enjoy all the pleasures obtainable in Bologna, but nowhere so cheaply, so easily or with such freedom. The living is excellent and there are arcades where one can walk in the shade in learned and witty company. It is a great pity that, because of either the air, the water or the wine—for men of science have not made up their minds on the subject—persons who live in Bologna are subject to a slight itch. The Bolognese, however, far from finding this unpleasant, seem to think it an advantage; it gives them the pleasure of scratching themselves. In spring time the ladies distinguish themselves by the grace with which they use their fingers.

Towards mid-lent I left the Corticelli, wishing her a pleasant journey, for she was going to fulfil a year's engagement in Prague as second dancer. I promised to fetch her and her mother to Paris and my readers will see how I kept my word.

I got to Modena the evening after I left Bologna, and I stopped there, through one of those sudden whims to which I have always been subject. Next morning I went out to see some pictures and, as I was returning to my lodging for dinner, a blackguardly-looking fellow came up and ordered me, on the part of the government, to continue my journey on the day following at latest.

"Very good," said I, and the fellow went away.

"Who is that man?" said I to the landlord.

"A spy."

"A spy! And the government dares to send such a fellow to me?"

"The *borgello* must have sent him."

"Then the *borgello* is the Governor of Modena—the infamous wretch!"

"Hush! hush! All the best families speak to him in the street."

"Then the best people are very low here, I suppose?"

"Not more than anywhere else. He is the manager of the opera house and the greatest noblemen dine with him and thus secure his favour."

"It's incredible! But why should the high and mighty *borgello* send me away from Modena?"

"I don't know, but do you take my advice and go and speak to him; you will find him a fine fellow."

Instead of going to see this blackguard, I called on the Abbé Testa Grossa, whom I had known in Vienna in 1753. Although he was a man of low extraction, he had a keen wit. At this time he was old and resting on his laurels; he had fought his way into favour by the sheer force of merit, and his master, the Duke of Modena, had long considered him worthy to be his representative with other powers.

Abbé Testa Grossa recognised me and gave me the most gracious reception, but, when he heard of what had befallen me, he seemed much annoyed.

"What can I do?" said I.

"You had better go, as the man may put a much more grievous insult on you."

"I will do so, but could you oblige me by telling me the reason for such a high-handed action?"

"Come again this evening; I shall probably be able to satisfy you."

I called on the abbé again in the evening, for I felt anxious to learn in what way I had offended the lord *borgello*, to whom I thought I was quite unknown. The abbé satisfied me.

"The *borgello*," said he, "saw your name on the bill which he receives daily containing a list of the names of those who enter or leave the city. He remembered that you were daring enough to escape from The Leads and, as he does not at all approve of that sort of thing, he resolves not to let the Modenese be contaminated by so egregious an example of the defiance of justice, however unjust it may be, and, in short, he has given you the order to leave the town."

"I am much obliged, but I really wonder how it is that, while you were telling me this, you did not blush to be a subject of the Duke of Modena. What an unworthy action! How contrary is such a system of government to all the best interests of the state!"

"You are quite right, my dear sir, but I am afraid that men are still far from understanding what institutions are best suited to their dignity."

"That is doubtless due to the fact that so many men are devoid of any dignity."

"I will not contradict you."

"Farewell, abbé."

"Farewell, M. Casanova."

Next morning, just as I was going to get into my carriage, a young man between twenty-five and thirty, tall and strong and broad-shouldered, his eyes black and glittering, his eyebrows strongly arched and his general air that of an arrant cut-throat, accosted me and begged me to step inside and hear what he had to say.

"If you like to stop at Parma for three days and if you will promise to give me fifty sequins when I bring you the news that the *borgello* is dead, I promise to shoot him within the next twenty-four hours."

"Thanks. Such an animal as that should be allowed to die a natural death. Here's a crown to drink my health."

At the present time I feel very thankful that I acted as I did, but I confess that, if I had felt sure that it was not a trap, I should have promised the money. The fear of committing myself spared me this crime.

The next day I got to Parma and put up at the posting-house under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt, which I still bear. When an honest man adopts a name which belongs to no one, no one has a right to contest his use of it; it becomes a man's duty to keep the name. I had now borne it for two years, but I often subjoined to it my family name.

When I got to Parma I dismissed Costa, but a week after I had the misfortune to take him on again. His father, who was a poor violin player, as I had once been, with a large family to provide for, excited my pity.

I made inquiries about M. Antonio, but he had left the place; and M. Dubois Chatelereux, Director of the Mint, had gone to Venice with the permission of the Duke of Parma, to set up the beam, which was never brought into use. Republics are famous for their superstitious attachment to old customs; they are afraid that changes for the better may destroy the stability of the state, and the government of aristocratic Venice still preserves its original Greek character.

My Spaniard was delighted when I dismissed Costa and proportionately sorry when I took him back.

"He's no profligate," said Le Duc. "He is steady and has no liking for bad company. But I think he is a robber, and a dangerous robber, too. I know it because he seems so scrupulously careful not to cheat in small things. Remember what I say, sir; he will do you. He is waiting to gain your confidence and then he will strike home. Now, I am quite a different sort of fellow, a rogue in a small way; but you know me."

His insight was keener than mine, for five or six months later the Italian robbed me of fifty thousand crowns. Twenty-three years afterwards, in 1784, I found him in Venice, valet to Count Hardegg, and I felt inclined to have him hanged. I showed him by proof positive that I could do so if I liked; but he had recourse to tears and supplications

and to the intercession of a worthy man named Bertrand, who lived with the ambassador of the King of Sardinia. I esteemed this individual and he appealed to me successfully to pardon Costa. I asked the wretch what he had done with the gold and jewels he had stolen from me, and he told me he had lost the whole of it in furnishing funds for a game of *biribi*, that he had been despoiled by his own associates and had been poor and miserable ever since.

In the same year in which he robbed me, he married Momolo's daughter and, after making her a mother, abandoned her.

To pursue our story.

At Turin I lodged in a private house with the Abbé Gama, who had been expecting me. In spite of the good Abbé's sermon on economy, I took the whole of the first floor, and a fine suite it was. We discussed diplomatic topics and he assured me that I should be accredited in May and that he would give me instructions as to the part I was to play. I was pleased with this commission and told the abbé I should be ready to go to Augsburg whenever the ambassadors of the belligerent powers met there.

After making the necessary arrangements with my landlady with regard to my meals, I went to a coffee-house to read the papers and the first person I saw was the Marquis Désarmoises, whom I had known in Savoy. The first thing he said was that all games of chance were forbidden and that the ladies I had met at Aix would be delighted to see me. As for himself, he said that he lived by playing backgammon, though he was not at all lucky at it, as talent went for more than luck in that game. I can understand how, if Fortune is neutral, the best player will win, but I do not see how the contrary can take place.

We went for a walk in the promenade leading to the citadel, where I saw numerous extremely pretty women. In Turin the fair sex is most delightful, but the police regulations are troublesome to a degree. Owing to the town being a small one and thinly peopled, the police spies find out everything. Thus one cannot enjoy any little liberties without great precautions and the aid of cunning procuresses, who have to be well paid, as they would be cruelly punished if they were found out. No prostitutes and no kept women are allowed, much to the delight of the married women and with results which the ignorant police might have anticipated. As will be imagined, pederasty has a fine field in this town, where the passions are kept under lock and key.

Amongst the beauties I looked at, only one attracted me. I asked Désarmoises her name, as he knew all of them.

"That's the famous Leah," said he. "She is a Jewess and impregnable. She has resisted the attacks of the best strategists in Turin. Her father is a famous horse-dealer; you can go and see her easily enough, but there's nothing to be done there."

The greater the difficulty, the more I felt spurred on to attempt it.

"Take me there," said I to Désarmoises.

"As soon as you please."

I asked him to dine with me and we were on our way when we met M. Zeroli and two or three other persons whom I had known at Aix. I gave and received plenty of compliments but, not wishing to pay them any visits, I excused myself on the pretext of business.

When we had finished dinner, Désarmoises took me to the horse-dealer's. I asked if he had a good saddle horse. He called a lad and gave his orders and, whilst he was speaking, the charming daughter appeared on the scene. She was dazzlingly beautiful and could not have been over twenty-two. Her figure was as lissom as a nymph's, her hair a raven black, her complexion a meeting of the lily and the rose, her eyes full of fire, her lashes long and her eyebrows so well arched that they seemed ready to make war on any who would dare the conquest of her charms. All about her betokened an educated mind and knowledge of the world.

I was so absorbed in the contemplation of her charms that I did not notice the horse when it was brought to me. However, I proceeded to scrutinise it, pretending to be an expert, and, after feeling the knees and legs, turning back the ears and looking at the teeth, I tested its behaviour at a walk, a trot and a gallop and then told the Jew that I would come and try it myself in top-boots the next day. The horse was a fine dappled bay and was priced at forty Piedmontese pistoles—about a hundred sequins.

"He is gentleness itself," said Leah, "and ambles as fast as any other horse trots."

"You have ridden him, then?"

"Often, sir, and, if I were rich, I would never sell him."

"I won't buy the horse till I have seen you ride it."

She blushed at this.

"You must oblige the gentleman," said her father. She consented to do so and I promised to come again at nine o'clock the next day.

I was exact to time, as may be imagined, and I found Leah in riding costume. What proportions! What a Venus Callipyge! I was captivated.

Two horses were ready and she leapt on hers with the ease and grace of a practised rider, and I got up on mine. We rode together for some distance. The horse went well enough, but what of that? I had eyes for nothing but her.

As I was leaving, I said:

"Fair Leah, I will buy the horse, but as a present for you; if you will not take it, I shall leave Turin to-day. The only condition I attach to the gift is that you will ride with me whenever I ask you."

I saw she seemed favourably inclined to my proposal, so I told her I would stay six weeks in Turin, that I had fallen in love with her on the promenade and that the purchase of the horse had been a mere pretext for disclosing to her my feelings. She replied modestly that she was vastly flattered by the liking I had taken to her and that I need not have made such a present to assure myself of her friendship.

"I wish I could give myself that happiness, fair Leah, but I'm in a great hurry."

As I finished this sentence, her father came in and I left the house, telling him that, if I could not come the next day, I would come the day after and we could talk about the phaeton then. It was plain that Leah thought I was lavish of my money and would make a capital dupe. She would relish the phaeton, as she relished the horse, but I knew that I was not quite such a fool as that. It had not cost me much trouble to resolve to chance the loss of a hundred sequins, but beyond that I wanted some value for my money.

I suspended my visits temporarily, to see how Leah and her father would settle it between themselves. I reckoned on the Jew's greediness to work well for me. He was very fond of money and must have been angry that his daughter had not made me buy the phaeton by some means or another, for, so long as the phaeton was bought, the rest would be a matter of indifference to him. I felt almost certain they would come to see me.

The following Saturday I saw the fair Jewess on the promenade. We were near enough for me to accost her without seeming to be anxious to do so and her look seemed to say, "Come."

"We see no more of you, now," said she, "but come and breakfast with me to-morrow or I will send you back the horse."

I promised to be with her in good time and, as the reader will imagine, I kept my word.

The breakfast party was confined almost to ourselves, for, though her aunt was present, she was there only for decency's sake. After breakfast we resolved to have a ride and she changed her clothes before me, but also before her aunt. She first put on her leather breeches, then let her skirts fall, took off her corset and donned a jacket. With seeming indifference I succeeded in catching a glimpse of a magnificent breast, but the sly puss knew how much my indifference was worth.

"Will you arrange my frill?" said she.

This was a warm occupation for me and I am afraid my hand was indiscreet. Nevertheless, I thought I detected a fixed design under all this seeming complaisance and I was on my guard.

Her father came up just as we were getting on horseback.

"If you will buy the phaeton and horses," said he, "I will abate twenty sequins."

"All that depends on your daughter," said I.

We set off at a walk and Leah told me she had been imprudent enough to confess to her father that she could make me buy the carriage and that, if I did not wish to embroil her with him, I would be kind enough to purchase it.

"Strike the bargain," said she, "and you can give it to me when you are sure of my love."

"My dear Leah, I am your humble servant, but you know on what condition."

"I promise to drive out with you whenever you please without getting out of the carriage, but I know that you would not care for that. No, your affection was only a temporary caprice."

"To convince you of the contrary, I will buy the phaeton and put it in a coach-house. I will see that the horses are taken care of, though I shall not use them. But, if you do not make me happy in the course of a week, I shall re-sell the whole."

"Come to-morrow."

"I will do so, but I must have some pledge of your affection this morning."

"This morning? It is impossible."

"I beg your pardon; I will go upstairs with you and you can show me more than one kindness while you are undressing."

We returned home and I was astonished to hear her telling her father that the phaeton was mine and all he had to do was to put in the horses. The Jew grinned and we all went upstairs and Leah coolly said, "Count out the money."

"I have no money about me, but I will write you a cheque if you like."

"Here is paper."

I wrote a cheque on Zappata for three hundred sequins, payable at sight. The Jew went off to get the money and Leah remained alone with me.

"You have trusted me," said she, "and have thus shown yourself worthy of my love."

"Then undress, quick!"

"No, my aunt is about the house, and, as I cannot shut the door without exciting suspicion, she might come in; but I promise that you shall be content with me to-morrow. Nevertheless, I am going to undress, but you must go into this closet; you may come back when I have my woman's clothes on again."

I agreed to this arrangement and she shut me in. I examined the door and discovered a small chink between the boards. I got on a stool and saw Leah sitting on a sofa opposite to me engaged in undressing herself. She took off her shift and wiped her breasts and her feet with a towel and, just as she had taken off her breeches, and was as naked as my hand, one of her rings happened to slip off her finger and rolled under the sofa. She got up, looked to right and left and then stooped to search under the sofa, and to do this she had to kneel with her head down. When she got back to the couch, the towel came again into requisition and she wiped herself all over. I felt sure that she knew I was a witness of all these operations and she probably guessed what a fire the sight would kindle in my inflammable breast.

At last her toilette was finished and she let me out. I clasped her in my arms with the words, "I saw everything." She pretended not to believe me, so I showed her the chink and was going to obtain my just dues when the accursed Moses came in. He must have been blind, or he would have seen the state his daughter had put me in; however,

he thanked me and gave me a receipt for the money, saying. "Everything in my poor house is at your service."

I bade them adieu and went away in an ill temper. I got into my phaeton and drove home and told the coachman to find me a stable for the horses and a coach-house for the carriage.

I did not expect to see Leah again and felt enraged with her. She had pleased me only too much by her voluptuous attitudes, but she had set up an irritation wholly hostile to Love. She had made Love a robber and the hungry boy had consented; but afterwards, when he craved more substantial fare, she refused him and ardour was succeeded by contempt. Leah did not want to confess herself to be what she really was, and my love would not declare itself knavish.

I made the acquaintance of an amiable chevalier, a soldier, a man of letters and a great lover of horses, who introduced me to several pleasant families. However, I did not cultivate them, as they offered me only the pleasures of sentiment, while I longed for lustier fare, for which I was willing to pay heavily. The Chevalier de Brézé was not the man for me; he was too respectable for a profligate like myself. He bought the phaeton and horses and I lost only thirty sequins by the transaction.

A certain M. Baretti, who had known me at Aix and had been the Marquis de Prié's croupier, took me to see the Mazzoli, formerly a dancer and at that time mistress to the Chevalier Raiberti, a hard-headed but honest man, who was then Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Although the Mazzoli was by no means pretty, she was extremely complaisant and had several girls at her house for me to see; but I did not think any of them worthy of occupying Leah's place. I fancied I no longer loved Leah, but I was wrong.

The Chevalier Cocona, who had the misfortune to be suffering from a venereal disease, gave me up his mistress, a pretty little soubrette; but, in spite of the evidence of my own eyes and the assurances she gave me, I could not make up my mind to have her and my fear made me leave her untouched. Count Trana, a brother of the chevalier's, whom I had known at Aix, introduced me to Madame de S—, a lady of high rank and very good-looking, but she tried to involve me in a criminal transaction and I ceased to call on her. Shortly after Count Trana's uncle died and he became rich and got married, but he lived an unhappy life.

I was getting bored and Désarmoises, who had all his meals with me, did not know what to do. At last he advised me to make the acquaintance of a certain Madame R—, a Frenchwoman, well known in Turin as a milliner and dressmaker. She had six or eight girls working for her in a room adjoining her shop. Désarmoises thought, if I got in there I might possibly be able to find one to my taste. As my purse was well furnished, I thought I should not have much difficulty, so I called on Madame R—. I was agreeably surprised to find Leah there, bargaining for a quantity of articles, all of which she pronounced

to be too dear. She told me, kindly but reproachfully, that she had thought I must be ill.

"I have been very busy," I said, and felt all my old ardour revive. She asked me to come to a Jewish wedding, where there would be a good many people and several pretty girls. I knew that ceremonies of this kind are very amusing and I promised to be present. She proceeded with her bargaining, but the price was still too high and she left the shop. Madame R— was going to put back all the trifles in their places, but I said, "I will take the lot myself."

She smiled and I drew out my purse and paid the money.

"Where do you live, sir," said she, "and when shall I send you your purchases?"

"You may bring them to-morrow yourself and do me the honour of breakfasting with me."

"I can never leave the shop, sir."

In spite of her thirty-five years, Madame R— was still what would be called a tasty morsel and she had taken my fancy.

"I want some dark lace," said I.

"Then kindly follow me, sir."

I was delighted, when I entered the room, to see a lot of young work-girls, all charming, hard at work and scarcely daring to look at me. Madame R— opened several cupboards and showed me some magnificent lace. I was distracted by the sight of so many delicious nymphs and told her that I wanted the lace for two *baoutes* in the Venetian style. She knew what I meant. The lace cost me upwards of a hundred sequins. Madame R— told two of her girls to bring me the lace the next day, together with the goods which Leah had thought too dear. They meekly replied, "Yes, mother."

They rose and kissed the mother's hand, which I thought a ridiculous ceremony; however, it gave me an opportunity of examining them and I thought them delicious. We went back to the shop and, sitting down by the counter, I enlarged on the beauty of the girls, adding (though not with strict truth) that I vastly preferred their mistress. She thanked me for the compliment and told me plainly that she had a lover and soon after named him. He was the Comte de St. Giles, an infirm and elderly man and by no means a model lover. I thought Madame R— was jesting, but next day I ascertained that she was speaking the truth. Well, everyone to his taste and I suspect that she was more in love with the count's purse than his person. I had met him at the Exchange coffee-house.

The next day the two pretty milliners brought me my goods. I offered them chocolate, but they firmly and persistently declined. The fancy took me to send them to Leah with all the things she had chosen and I bade them return and tell me what sort of reception they had had. They said they would do so and waited for me to write her a note. I could not give them the slightest mark of affection. I dared not shut the door and the mistress and the ugly young woman of the house kept going and coming all the time; but, when they came back,

I waited for them on the stairs and, giving them a sequin each, told each of them that she might command my heart if she would. Leah had accepted my handsome present and sent to say that she was waiting for me.

As I was walking aimlessly about in the afternoon, I happened to pass the milliner's shop and Madame R— saw me and made me come in and sit down beside her.

"I am really much obliged to you," said she, "for your kindness to my girls. They came home enchanted. Tell me frankly whether you are really in love with the pretty Jewess."

"I am really in love with her but, as she will not make me happy, I have signed my own dismissal."

"You were quite right. All Leah thinks of is duping those who are captivated by her charms."

"Do not your charming apprentices, perhaps, follow the same maxim?"

"No; but they are complaisant only when I give them leave."

"Then I commend myself to your intercession, for they would not even take a cup of chocolate from me."

"They were perfectly right not to accept your chocolate; but I see you do not know the ways of Turin. Do you find yourself comfortable in your present lodging?"

"Quite so."

"Are you perfectly free to do what you like?"

"I think so."

"Can you give supper to anyone you like in your own rooms? I am certain you can't."

"I have not had the opportunity of trying the experiment so far, but I believe..."

"Don't flatter yourself by believing anything; the house is full of the spies of the police."

"Then you think that I could not give you and two or three of your girls a little supper?"

"I should take very good care not to go to it, that's all I know. By next morning it would be known to all the town and especially to the police."

"Well, supposing I look out for another lodging?"

"It's the same everywhere. Turin is a perfect nest of spies; but I do know a house where you could live at your ease and where my girls might perhaps be able to bring you your purchases. But we should have to be very careful."

"Where is the house? I will be guided by you in everything."

"Don't trust a Piedmontese—that's the first commandment here."

She then gave me the address of a small furnished house, which was inhabited only by an old doorkeeper and his wife.

"They will let it you by the month," said she, "and, if you pay a month in advance, you need not even tell them your name."

I found the house to be a very pretty one, standing in a lonely street at about two hundred paces from the citadel. One gate, large enough to admit a carriage, led into the country. I found everything to be as Madame R— had described it. I paid a month in advance without any bargaining and in a day I had settled in my new lodging. Madame R— admired my celerity.

I went to the Jewish wedding and enjoyed myself, for there is something at once solemn and ridiculous about the ceremony; but I resisted all Leah's endeavours to get me once more into her meshes. I hired a closed carriage from her father, which, with the horses, I placed in the coach-house and stables of my new house. Thus I was absolutely free to go wherever I would by night or by day, for I was at once in the town and in the country. I was obliged to tell the inquisitive Gama where I was living and I hid nothing from Désarmoises, whose needs made him altogether dependent on me. Nevertheless I gave orders that my door was shut to them, as to everyone else, unless I had given special instructions that they were to be admitted. I had no reason to doubt the fidelity of my two servants.

In this blissful abode I enjoyed all Mme. M—'s girls, one after the other. The one I wanted always brought a companion, whom I usually sent back after giving her a slice of the cake. The last of them, whose name was Victorine, as fair as the day and as tender as a dove, had the misfortune to be "tied," though she knew nothing about it. Mme. R—, who was equally ignorant on the subject, had represented her to me as a virgin. . . .

Poor Victorine, condemned to die a maid (unless some clever surgeon performed the same operation that was undergone by Mlle. Cheruffini shortly after M. Lepri married her), wept when I said:

"My dear child, your little Hymen defies the most vigorous lover to enter his temple."

But I consoled her by saying that a good surgeon could easily make a perfect woman of her.

In the morning I told Madame R— of the case. She laughed and said, "It may prove a happy accident for Victorine; it may make her fortune."

A few years after the Count of Padua had her operated on and made her fortune. When I came back from Spain, I found that she was with child, so that I could not exact the due reward for all the trouble I had taken with her.

Early in the morning on Maundy Thursday, they told me that Moses and Leah wanted to see me. I had not expected to see them, but I welcomed them warmly. Throughout Holy Week the Jews dared not show themselves in the streets of Turin and I advised them to stay with me till the Saturday. Moses began to try and get me to purchase a ring from him and I judged from that that I should not have to press the father and daughter, very much.

"I can buy this ring only from Leah's hands," said I.

He grinned, thinking doubtless that I intended to make her a present of it, but I was resolved to disappoint him. I gave them a magnificent dinner and supper and in the evening they were shown a double-bedded room not far from mine. I might have put them in different rooms and Leah in a room adjoining mine, which would have facilitated any nocturnal excursions; but, after all I had done for her, I was resolved to owe nothing to a surprise, she should come of herself.

The next day Moses (who noticed that I had not yet bought the ring) was obliged to go out on business and asked for the loan of my carriage for the whole day, telling me that he would come for his daughter in the evening. I had the horses harnessed and, when he was gone, I bought the ring of Leah for six hundred sequins, but on my own terms. I was in my own house and she could not deceive me. As soon as the father was safely out of the way, I possessed myself of the daughter. She proved a docile and amorous subject the whole day. I had reduced her to a state of nature and, though her body was as perfect as can well be imagined, I used it and abused it in every way imaginable. In the evening her father found her looking rather tired, but he seemed as pleased as I was. Leah was not quite so well satisfied, for till the moment of their departure she was expecting me to give her the ring, but I contented myself with saying that I should like to reserve myself the pleasure of taking it to her.

On Easter Monday a man brought me a note summoning me to appear at the police office.

CHAPTER 88

THIS citation, which did not promise to lead to anything agreeable, surprised and displeased me exceedingly. However, I could not avoid it, so I drove to the office of the deputy superintendent of police. I found him sitting at a long table, surrounded by about a score of people standing. He was a man of sixty, hideously ugly, his enormous nose half destroyed by an ulcer hidden by a large black-silk plaster, his mouth of huge dimensions, his lips thick, with small, green eyes, and eyebrows which had partly turned white. As soon as this disgusting fellow saw me, he began, "You are the Chevalier de Seingalt?"

"That is my name, and I have come here to ask how I can oblige you?"

"I have summoned you here to order you to leave the place in three days at the latest."

"And, as you have no right to give such an order, I have come here to tell you that I shall go when I please, and not before."

"I will expel you by force."

"You may do that whenever you please. I cannot resist force, but I trust you will give the matter a second thought; for in a well-ordered city they do not expel a man who has committed no crime and has a balance of a hundred thousand francs in the bank."

"That's all very well, but in three days you have plenty of time to pack up and arrange matters with your banker. I advise you to obey, as the command comes from the King."

"If I were to leave town, I should become accessory to your injustice! I will not obey, but since you mention the King's name, I will go to His Majesty at once and he will deny your words or revoke the unjust order you have given me with such publicity."

"Pray, does not the King possess the power to make you go?"

"Yes, by force, but not by justice. He has also the power to kill me, but he would have to provide the executioner, as he could not make me commit suicide."

• "You argue well, but nevertheless you will obey."

"I argue well, but I did not learn the art from you, and I will not obey."

With these words I turned my back on him and left without another word.

I was in a furious rage. I felt inclined to offer overt resistance to all the myrmidons of the infamous superintendent. Nevertheless I soon calmed myself and, summoning prudence to my aid, I remembered the Chevalier Raiberti, whom I had seen at his mistress's house, and I decided on asking his advice. He was the chief permanent official in the department of foreign affairs. I told the coachman to drive to his house and I recounted to him the whole tale, saying, finally, that I should like to speak to the King, as I was resolved that I would not go unless I was forced to do so. The worthy man advised me to go to the Chevalier Osorio, the principal secretary for foreign affairs, who could always get an audience with the King. I was pleased with his advice and went immediately to the minister, who was a Sicilian and a man of parts. He gave me a very good reception and, after I had informed him of the circumstances of the case, I begged him to communicate the matter to His Majesty, adding that, as the superintendent's order appeared horribly unjust to me I was resolved not to obey it unless compelled to do so by main force. He promised to oblige me in the way I wished, and told me to call again the next day.

After leaving him, I took a short walk to cool myself and then went to see the Abbé Gama, hoping to be the first to impart my ridiculous adventure to him. I was disappointed; he already knew that I had been ordered to go and how I had answered the superintendent. When he saw that I persisted in my determination to resist, he did not condemn my firmness, though he must have thought it very extraordinary, for the good abbé could not understand anybody's disobeying the order of the authorities. He assured me that, if I had to go, he would send me the necessary instructions to any address I liked to name.

The next day the Chevalier Osorio received me with the utmost politeness, which I thought a good omen. The Chevalier Raiberti had spoken to him in my behalf and he had laid the matter before the King and also before the Count d'Aglié and the result was that I could stay as long as I liked. The Count d'Aglié was none other than the horrible

superintendent. I was told that I must wait on him and he would give me leave to remain in Turin till my affairs were settled.

"My only business here," said I, "is to spend my money till I have instructions from the Court of Portugal to attend the Congress of Augsburg on behalf of His Most Faithful Majesty."

"Then you think that this Congress will take place?"

"Nobody doubts it."

"Somebody believes it will all end in smoke. However, I am delighted to have been of service to you and I shall be curious to hear what sort of reception you get from the superintendent."

I felt ill at ease. I went to the police office immediately, glad to show myself victorious and anxious to see how the superintendent would look when I came in. However, I could not flatter myself that he looked ashamed of himself; these people have the brazen cheek of gaolers and do not know what it is to blush. As soon as he saw me, he began:

"The Chevalier Osorio tells me that you have business in Turin which will keep you here for some days. You may therefore stay, but you must tell me as nearly as possible how long a time you require."

"I cannot possibly tell you that."

"Why?—if you don't mind telling me."

"I am awaiting instructions from the Court of Portugal to attend the Congress to be held at Augsburg and, before I could tell you how long I shall have to stay, I should be compelled to ask His Most Faithful Majesty. However, I believe I shall be able to leave for Paris in a month, more or less. If this time is not sufficient for me to do my business, I will intimate the fact to you."

"I shall be much obliged by your doing so."

This time I made him a bow, which was returned, and, on leaving the office, I returned to the Chevalier Osorio, who said, with a smile, that I had caught the superintendent, as I had taken an indefinite period which left me quite at my ease.

The diplomatic Gama, who firmly believed that the Congress would meet, was delighted when I told him that the Chevalier Osorio was incredulous on the subject. He was charmed to think his wit keener than the minister's; it exalted him in his own eyes. I told him that, whatever the chevalier might say, I would go to Augsburg and would set out in three or four weeks.

Madame R— congratulated me over and over again, for she was enchanted that I had humiliated the superintendent; but all the same we thought we had better give up our little suppers. As I had had a taste of all her girls, this was not such a great sacrifice for me to make.

I continued thus till the middle of May, when I left Turin after receiving letters from the Abbé Gama to Lord Stormont, who was to represent England at the approaching Congress. It was with this nobleman that I was to work in concert at the Congress.

Before going to Germany, I wanted to see Madame d'Urfé, and I wrote to her, asking her to send me a letter of introduction to M. de Rochebaron, who might be useful to me. I also asked M. Raiberti to

give me a letter for Chambéry, where I wanted to visit the divine M— M— (of whom I still thought with affection) at her convent grating. I wrote to my friend Valenglard, asking him to remind Madame Morin that she had promised to show me a likeness to somebody at Chambéry.

But here I must record an event worthy of being noted, which might have caused me serious trouble.

Five or six days before my departure, Désarmoises came to me, looking very downcast, and told me that he had been ordered to leave Turin in twenty-four hours.

"Do you know why?" I asked him.

"Last night, when I was at the coffee-house, Count Scarnafis dared to say that France subsidised the Berne newspapers. I told him he lied, at which he rose and left the place in a rage, giving me a glance the meaning of which is not doubtful. I followed him to bring him to reason or give him satisfaction, but he would do nothing and I suspect he went to the police to complain. I shall have to leave Turin early to-morrow morning."

"You're a Frenchman and, as you can claim the protection of your ambassador, you would make a mistake in leaving so suddenly."

"In the first place the ambassador is away; and in the second, my cruel father disavows me. No, I would rather go and wait for you in Lyons. All I want is for you to lend me a hundred crowns, for which I will give you an account."

"It will be an easy account to keep," said I, "but a long time before it is settled."

"Possibly; but, if it is in my power, I will show my gratitude for the kindnesses you have done me."

I gave him a hundred crowns and wished him a pleasant journey, telling him I intended to stay a few days in Chambéry.

I got a letter of credit on an Augsburg house and, three days after I left Turin, I was at Chambéry. There was only one inn there in those days, so I was not much puzzled to choose where I would go, but for all that I found myself very comfortable.

As I entered my room, I was struck by seeing an extremely pretty girl coming out of an adjacent room.

"Who is that young lady?" said I to the chambermaid who was escorting me.

"That's the wife of a young gentleman who has to keep his bed to get cured of a sword-thrust which he received four days ago on his way from France."

I could not look at her without feeling the sting of concupiscence. As I was leaving my room, I saw the door half-open and I stopped short and offered my services as a neighbour. She thanked me politely and asked me in. I saw a handsome young man sitting up in bed, so I went up to inquire how he felt.

"The doctor will not let him talk," said the young lady, "on account of a sword-thrust in the chest he received at half a league from here."

We hope he will be all right in a few days and then we can continue our journey."

"Where are you going, madame?"

"To Geneva."

Just as I was leaving, a maid came to ask if I would take supper in my own room or with the lady. I laughed at her stupidity and said I would sup in my own apartment, adding that I had not the honour of the lady's acquaintance.

At this, the young lady said it would give her great pleasure if I would sup with her, and the husband repeated this assurance in a whisper. I accepted the invitation gratefully and thought I remarked that they were pleased. The lady escorted me as far as the stairs and I took the liberty of kissing her hand, which in France is a declaration of tender, though respectful, affection.

At the post-office I found a letter from Valenglard, telling me that Madame Morin would meet me at Chambéry if I would send her a carriage, and another from Désarmois dated from Lyons. He told me that, as he was on his way from Chambéry, he had encountered his daughter in company with a rascal who had carried her off. He had buried his sword in his body and would have killed him if he had been able to stop their carriage. He suspected that they had stopped at Chambéry, and he begged me to try to persuade his daughter to return to Lyons, and he added that, if she would not do so, I ought to oblige him by sending her back by force. He assured me that they were not married and begged me to answer his letter by express, for which purpose he sent me his address.

I guessed at once that this daughter of his was my fair neighbour, but I did not feel at all inclined to come to the aid of the father in the way he wished.

As soon as I got back to the inn, I sent off Le Duc in a travelling carriage to Madame Morin, whom I informed by letter that, as I was at Chambéry only for her sake, I would await her convenience. This done, I abandoned myself to the delight I felt at the romantic adventure which fortune had put in my way.

I respected Mlle. Désarmois and her ravisher, and I did not care to inquire whether I was impelled in what I did by virtue or vice; but I could not help perceiving that my motives were of a mixed nature, for, if I was amorous, I was also very glad to be of assistance to two young lovers, and all the more from my knowledge of the father's criminal passion.

On entering their room, I found the invalid in the surgeon's hands. He pronounced the wound not to be dangerous, in spite of its depth; suppuration had taken place without setting up inflammation—in short, the young man needed only time and rest. When the doctor had gone, I congratulated the patient on his condition, advising him to be careful what he ate and not to talk. I then gave Mlle. Désarmois her father's letter and said farewell for the time being, telling them

I would go to my own room till supper-time. I felt sure that she would come and speak to me after reading her father's letter.

In a quarter of an hour she knocked timidly at my door and, when I let her in, she gave me back the letter and asked me what I thought of doing.

"Nothing. I shall be only too happy, however, if I can be of any service to you."

"Ah! I breathe again!"

"Could you imagine me pursuing any other line of conduct? I am much interested in you and will do all in my power to help you. Are you married?"

"Not yet, but we are going to be married when we get to Geneva."

"Sit down and tell me all about yourself. I know that your father has the misfortune to be in love with you and that you avoid his attentions."

"He has told you that much? I am glad of it. A year ago he came to Lyons and, as soon as I knew he was in the town, I took refuge with a friend of my mother's, for I was aware that I could not stay in the same house with my father for an hour without exposing myself to the most horrible outrage. The young man in bed is the son of a rich Geneva merchant. My father introduced him to me two years ago and we soon fell in love with each other. My father went away to Marseilles and my lover asked my mother to give me in marriage to him, but she did not feel authorised to do so without my father's consent. She wrote and asked him, but he replied that he would announce his decision when he returned to Lyons. My lover went to Geneva and, as his father approved of the match, he returned with all the necessary documents and a strong letter of commendation from M. Tolosan. When my father came back from Marseilles, I fled, as I told you, and my lover got M. Tolosan to ask my hand for him of my father. His reply was, 'I can give no answer till she returns to my house.' M. Tolosan brought me this reply and I told him that I was ready to obey if my mother would guarantee my safety. She replied, however, that she knew her husband too well to dare to have us both under the same roof. Again did M. Tolosan endeavour to obtain my father's consent, but to no purpose. A few days later my father left Lyons, telling us he was first going to Aix and then to Turin, and, as it was evident that he would never give his consent, my lover proposed that I go off with him, promising to marry me as soon as we reached Geneva. By ill luck we travelled through Savoy and thus met my father. As soon as he saw us, he stopped the carriage and called to me to get out. I began to shriek and, my lover taking me in his arms to protect me, my father stabbed him in the chest. No doubt he would have killed him but, seeing that my shrieks were bringing people to our rescue and probably believing that my lover was as good as dead, he got on horseback again and rode off at full speed. I can show you the sword still covered with blood."

"I am obliged to answer this letter of his and I am thinking how I can obtain his consent."

"That's of no consequence; we can marry and be happy without it."

"True, but you ought not to despise your dower."

"Good heavens! what dower? He has no money."

"But on the death of his father, the Marquis Désarmoises . . ."

"That's all a lie. My father has only a small yearly pension for having served thirty years as a government messenger. His father has been dead these thirty years and my mother and my sister live only by the work they do."

I was thunderstruck at the impudence of the fellow, who, after imposing on me so long, had himself put me in a position to discover his deceit. I said nothing. Just then we were told that supper was ready and we sat at table for three hours, talking the matter over. The poor wounded man had only to listen to me to know my feelings on the subject. His young mistress, as witty as she was pretty, jested on the foolish passion of her father, who had loved her madly ever since she was eleven.

"And you were always able to resist his attempts?" said I.

"Yes, whenever he pushed things too far."

"And how long did this state of things continue?"

"For two years. When I was thirteen, he tried to gather the fruit; but I began to shriek and escaped from his bed stark naked, and I went to take refuge with my mother, who from that day forth would not let me sleep with him again."

"You used to sleep with him? How could your mother allow it?"

"She never thought there was anything criminal in his affection for me, and I saw no wrong in it. I thought that what he did to me and what he made me do to him were mere trifles."

"But you saved the little treasure?"

"I kept it for my lover."

The poor lover, who was suffering more from the effects of hunger than from his wounds, laughed at this speech of hers, and she ran to him and covered his face with kisses. All this excited me intensely. Her story had been told with too much simplicity not to move me, especially when I had her before my eyes, for she possessed all the attractions which a woman can have, and I almost forgave her father for forgetting she was his daughter and falling in love with her.

When she escorted me back to my room, I made her feel how she had aroused me and she began to laugh; but, as my servants were close by, I was obliged to let her go.

Early next morning I wrote to her father that his daughter had resolved not to leave her lover, who was only slightly wounded, that they were in perfect safety and under the protection of the law at Chambéry, and finally that, having heard their story and judging them to be well matched, I could only approve of the course they had taken. When I had finished, I went into their room and gave them the

letter to read and, seeing the fair runaway at a loss how to express her gratitude, I begged the invalid to let me kiss her.

"Begin with me," said he, opening his arms.

My hypocritical love masked itself under the guise of paternal affection. I embraced the lover and then more amorously I performed the same office for the mistress and I showed them my purse full of gold, telling them it was at their service. While this was going on, the surgeon came in and I retired to my room.

At eleven o'clock Madame Morin and her daughter arrived, preceded by Le Duc on horseback, who announced their approach by numerous crackings of his whip. I welcomed her with open arms, thanking her for obliging me.

The first piece of news she gave me was that Mlle. Roman had become mistress of Louis XV, that she lived in a beautiful house at Passy and was five months gone with child. Thus she was in a fair way to become Queen of France, as my divine oracle had predicted.

"In Grenoble," she added, "you are the sole topic of conversation, and I advise you not to go there unless you wish to settle in the country, for they would never let you go. You would have all the nobility at your feet and, above all, the ladies anxious to know the lot of their daughters. Everybody believes in judicial astrology now and Valenglard is in triumph. He has bet a hundred louis to fifty that my niece will be delivered of a young prince, and he is confident of winning but, if he loses, everybody will laugh at him."

"Don't be afraid of his losing."

"Is it quite certain?"

"Has not the horoscope proved truthful in the principal particular? If the other circumstances do not follow, I must have made a great mistake in my calculations."

"I am delighted to hear you say so."

"I am going to Paris and I hope you will give me a letter of introduction to Madame Varnier, so that I may have the pleasure of seeing your niece."

"You shall have the letter to-morrow without fail."

I introduced Mlle. Désarmoises to her under the family name of her lover, and invited her to dine with Madame Morin and myself. After dinner we went to the convent and M— M— came to the grating very surprised at this unexpected visit from her aunt; but, when she saw me, she had need of all her presence of mind. When her aunt introduced me to her by name, she observed with true feminine tact that, during her stay at Aix, she had seen me five or six times at the fountain, but that I could not remember her features as she had always worn her veil. I admired her wit as much as her exquisite features. I thought she had grown prettier than ever, and no doubt my glance told her as much. We spent an hour in talking about Grenoble and her old friends, whom she gladly recalled to her memory, and then she went to fetch a young girl who was boarding at the convent, whom she liked and wanted to present to her aunt.

I seized the opportunity of telling Madame Morin that I was astonished at the likeness, that her very voice was like that of my Venetian M— M—, and I begged her to obtain for me the privilege of breakfasting with her niece the next day to get her to accept a dozen pounds of capital chocolate which I had brought with me from Genoa.

"You must make her the present yourself," said Madame Morin, "for, though she's a nun, she's a woman, and we women much prefer a present from a man's hand than from a woman's."

M— M— returned with the Superior of the convent, two other nuns and the young boarder, who came from Lyons and was exquisitely beautiful. I was obliged to talk to all the nuns and Madame Morin told her niece that I wanted her to try some excellent chocolate I had brought from Genoa, but that I hoped her lay sister would make it.

"Sir," said M— M—, "kindly send me the chocolate and to-morrow we will breakfast together, with these dear sisters."

As soon as I got back to my inn, I sent the chocolate with a respectful note, and I took supper in Madame Morin's room with her daughter and Mlle Désarmoises, of whom I was feeling more and more amorous, but I talked of M— M— all the time and I could see that the aunt suspected that the pretty nun was not altogether a stranger to me.

I breakfasted at the convent and I remember that the chocolate, the biscuits and the sweetmeats were served with a nicety which savoured somewhat of the world. When we had finished breakfast, I told M— M— that she would not find it so easy to give me a dinner, with twelve persons sitting down to table and with half the company in the convent and half in the parlour, separated by a light grating.

"It's a sight I should like to see," said I, "if you will allow me to pay all expenses."

"Certainly," replied M— M—, and this dinner was fixed for the next day.

M— M— took charge of the whole thing and promised to ask six nuns. Madame Morin, who knew my tastes, told her to spare nothing, and I informed her that I would send in the necessary wines.

I escorted Madame Morin, her daughter and Mlle Désarmoises back to the hotel and then I called on M. Magnan, to whom I had been recommended by the Chevalier Raiberti. I asked him to get me some of the best wine and he took me down to his cellar and told me to take what I liked. His wines proved to be admirable.

This M. Magnan was a clever man, of pleasing appearance and very comfortably off. He occupied an extremely large and comfortable house outside the town and his agreeable wife dispensed hospitality. She had ten children, amongst whom there were four pretty daughters, the eldest, who was nineteen, was especially good-looking.

We went to the convent at eleven o'clock and, after an hour's conversation, were told that dinner was ready. The table was beautifully laid, covered with a fair, white cloth and adorned with vases filled with artificial flowers so strongly scented that the air of the parlour

was quite balmy. The fatal grill was heavier than I had hoped. I found myself seated to the left of M— M— and there was no hope from that quarter. The fair Désarmoises was at my right and entertained us all the time with her amusing stories.

We in the parlour were waited on by Le Duc and Costa, while the nuns were served by their lay sisters. The abundant provision, the excellent wines, the pleasant, though sometimes equivocal, conversation, kept us all merrily employed for three hours. Mirth had the mastery over reason—or, to speak more plainly, we were all tipsy and, if it had not been for the fatal grill, I could have had the whole eleven ladies without much trouble. The young Désarmoises was so gay, indeed, that, if I had not restrained her, she would probably have scandalised all the nuns, who would have liked nothing better I was longing to have her to myself, that I might quench the flame she had kindled in my breast, and I had no doubt of my success on the first attempt. After coffee had been served, we went into another parlour and stayed there till night came on. Madame Morin took leave of her niece, and the handshakings, thanks and promises of remembrance between me and the nuns lasted for a good quarter of an hour. After I had said aloud to M— M— that I hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her before I left, we went back to the inn in high good humour over our curious party, which I still remember with pleasure.

Madame Morin gave me a letter for her cousin, Madame Varnier, and I promised to write to her from Paris and tell her all about the fair Mlle Roman. I presented the daughter with a beautiful pair of earrings and gave Madame Morin twelve pounds of good chocolate, which M. Magnan got for me and which the lady thought had come from Genoa. She went off at eight o'clock, preceded by Le Duc, who had orders to greet the doorkeeper's family on my behalf.

At Magnan's I had a dinner worthy of Lucullus and I promised to stay with him whenever I passed through Chambéry, which promise I have faithfully performed.

On leaving the gourmand's, I went to the convent and M— M— came down alone to the grating. She thanked me for coming to see her and added that my coming had disturbed her peace of mind.

"I am quite ready, dearest, to climb the garden wall and far more dexterously than your wretched humpback."

"Alas! that may not be, for, trust me, you are already spied upon. Everybody here is sure that we knew each other at Aix. Let us forget all and thus spare ourselves the torments of vain desires."

"Give me your hand."

"No. All is over. I love you still, probably I shall always love you, but I long for you to go and, by doing so, you will give me a proof of your love."

"This is dreadful; you astound me. You appear to me in perfect health, you are prettier than ever, you are made for the worship of the sweetest of the gods, and I can't understand how, with a temperament like yours, you can live in continual abstinence"

"Alas, lacking the reality, we console ourselves by pretending. I will not conceal from you that I love my young boarder. It is an innocent passion and keeps my mind calm. Her caresses quench the flame which would otherwise kill me."

"And that is not against your conscience?"

"I do not feel any distress on the subject."

"But you know it is a sin."

"Yes, so I confess it."

"And what does the confessor say?"

"Nothing. He absolves me and I am quite content."

"And does the pretty boarder confess, too?"

"Certainly, but she does not tell the father of a matter which she thinks is no sin."

"I wonder the confessor has not taught her, for that kind of instruction is a great pleasure."

"Our confessor is a wise old man."

"Am I to leave you, then, without a single kiss?"

"Not one."

"May I come again to-morrow? I must go the day after."

"You may come, but I cannot see you by myself, as the nuns might talk. I will bring my little one with me to save appearances. Come after dinner, but to the other parlour."

If I had not known M— M— at Aix, her religious ideas would have astonished me; but such was her character. She loved God and did not believe that the kind Father, who made us with passions, would be too severe because we had not the strength to subdue them. I returned to the inn, feeling vexed that the pretty nun would have no more to do with me, but sure of consolation from the fair Désarmoises.

I found her sitting on her lover's bed; his poor diet and the fever had left him in a state of great weakness. She told me she would sup in my room, to leave him in quiet, and the worthy young man shook my hand in token of his gratitude.

As I had had a good dinner at Magnan's, I ate little supper, but my companion, who had had only a light meal, ate and drank to an amazing extent. I gazed at her in a kind of wonder and she enjoyed my astonishment. When my servants had left the room, I challenged her to drink a bowl of punch with me and this put her into the state that wants to laugh all the time, and laughs to find itself deprived of strength and reasoning power. Nevertheless, I cannot excuse myself of having taken advantage of her condition, for in her voluptuous excitement she entered eagerly into the pleasure to which I excited her till two o'clock in the morning. By the time we separated, we were both of us exhausted.

I slept till eleven and, when I went to wish her good day, I found her smiling and as fresh as a rose. I asked her how she had passed the rest of the night.

"Wonderfully!" said she. "Like the first part of it."

"What time would you like to have dinner?"

"I won't dine; I prefer to keep my appetite for supper."

Here her lover joined in, saying in a weak voice, "It is impossible to keep up with her."

"In eating or drinking?" I asked.

"In eating, drinking and other things," he replied, with a smile. She laughed and kissed him affectionately.

This short dialogue convinced me that Mlle. Désarmoises must adore her lover, for, besides his being a handsome young man, his disposition was exactly suited to hers. I dined by myself and Le Duc came in as I was having dessert. He told me that the doorkeeper's daughters and their pretty cousin had made him wait for them to write to me, and he gave me three letters and three dozen of gloves which they had sent me as a gift. The letters urged me to come and spend a month with them and gave me to understand that I should be well pleased with my treatment. I had not the courage to return to a town where, with my reputation, I should have been obliged to draw horoscopes for all the young ladies, or make enemies by refusing.

After I had read the letters from Grenoble, I went to the convent and announced my presence and then entered the parlour which M— M— had indicated. She soon came down with the pretty boarder who partly took my place in M— M—'s amorous ecstasies. She had not yet completed her twelfth year, but she was extremely tall and well developed for her age. Gentleness, liveliness, candour and wit were united in her features and gave her expression an exquisite charm. She wore a well made corset disclosing a white throat, to which the fancy easily added the two spheres which would soon appear there. Her entrancing face, her raven locks and her ivory throat indicated what might be concealed, and my vagrant imagination made her into a budding Venus. I began by telling her that she was very pretty and would make her future husband a happy man. I knew she would blush at that.

It may be cruel, but it is thus that the language of seduction always begins. A girl of her age who does not blush at the mention of marriage is either an idiot or already an expert in profligacy. In spite of this, however, the blush which mounts to a young girl's cheek at the approach of such ideas is a puzzling problem. Whence does it arise? It may be from pure simplicity, it may be from shame and often from a mixture of both feelings. Then comes the fight between vice and virtue and it is usually virtue which has to give in. The desires, the servants of vice, usually attain their ends. As I knew the young boarder from M— M—'s description, I could not be ignorant of the source of those blushes, which added a fresh attraction to her youthful charms.

Pretending not to notice anything, I talked to M— M— for a few moments and then returned to the assault. She had regained her calm.

"How old are you, my pretty one?" said I.

"I am thirteen."

"You are wrong," said M— M—. "You have not yet completed your twelfth year"

"The time will come," said I, "when you will diminish the tale of your years, instead of increasing it."

"I shall never tell a lie, sir; I am sure of that."

"So you want to be a nun, do you?"

"I have not yet received my vocation; but, even if I live in the world, I need not be a liar."

"You are wrong; you will begin to lie as soon as you have a lover."

"Will my lover tell lies, too?"

"Certainly he will."

"If the matter were really so, then I should have a bad opinion of love, but I do not believe it, for I love my sweetheart here and I never conceal the truth from her."

"Yes, but loving a man is a different thing to loving a woman."

"No, it isn't; it's just the same."

"Not so, for you do not go to bed with a woman and you do with your husband."

"That's no matter, my love would be the same."

"What? You would not rather sleep with me than with M— M—?"

"No, indeed I should not, because you are a man and would see me."

"You don't want a man to see you, then?"

"No"

"Do you think you are so ugly?"

At this, she turned to M— M— and said, with evident vexation, "I am not really ugly, am I?"

"No, darling," said M— M—, bursting with laughter, "it is quite the other way; you are very pretty." With these words, she took her on her lap and embraced her tenderly.

"Your corset is too tight, mademoiselle; you can't possibly have such a small waist as that."

"You are mistaken; you can put your hand there and see for yourself."

"I can't believe it."

M— M— then held her close to the grill and told me to see for myself. At the same moment she turned up her dress.

"You were right," said I, "and I owe you an apology." But in my heart I cursed both the grating and the chemise.

The little girl looked at M— M— and reassured by her smile, asked if she might go away for a moment. I must have reduced her to a state in which a moment's solitude was necessary, and I myself was in a very excited condition.

As soon as she was gone, I said to M— M—, "Do you know that what you have shown me has made me unhappy?"

"Has it? Why?"

"Because your boarder is charming."

"I am sorry for that, for you can't possibly go any further."

I left these charming creatures in the evening, promising to visit

them again in a year, but, as I walked home, I could not help reflecting how often these asylums, supposed to be devoted to chastity and prayer, contain in themselves the hidden germs of corruption. How many a timorous and trustful mother is persuaded that the child of her affection will escape the dangers of the world by taking refuge in the cloister! But behind these bolts and bars desires grow to a frenzied extreme, they crave in vain to be satisfied.

When I returned to the inn, I took leave of the wounded man, whom I was happy to see out of danger. In vain I urged him to make use of my purse; he told me, with an affectionate embrace, that he had sufficient money and, if not, he had only to write to his father. I promised to stop at Lyons and force Désarmoises to desist from any steps he might be taking against them, telling them I had a power over him which would compel him to obey. I kept my word. After we had kissed and said goodbye, I took the future bride into my room, that we might sup together and enjoy ourselves till midnight.

I started at daybreak and the next day reached the Hôtel du Parc, in Lyons. I sent for Désarmoises and told him plainly that his daughter's charms had seduced me, that I thought her lover worthy of her and that I expected him, out of friendship for me, to consent to the marriage. I went further and told him that, if he did not consent to everything that very instant, I could no longer be his friend, and at this he gave in. He executed the requisite document in the presence of two witnesses and sent it to Chambéry by an express messenger.

This false marquis had me to dine with him in his poor house. There was nothing about his younger daughter to remind me of the elder and his wife inspired me with pity. Before I left, I managed to wrap up six louis in a piece of paper and gave it to her without the knowledge of her husband. A grateful look showed me how welcome the present was.

I was obliged to go to Paris, so I gave Désarmoises sufficient money for him to go to Strasburg and await me there in company with my Spaniard.

I thought myself wise in taking only Costa, but the inspiration came from my evil genius.

I took the Bourbonnais way and on the third day arrived in Paris and lodged at the Hôtel du Saint-Esprit, in the street of the same name.

Before going to bed, I sent Costa with a note to Madame d'Urfé promising to come and dine with her the next day. Costa was a good-looking young fellow and, as he spoke French badly and was rather a fool, I felt sure Madame d'Urfé would take him for some extraordinary being. She wrote to say that she was impatiently awaiting me. "How did the lady receive you, Costa?" "She looked into a mirror, sir, and said some words I could make nothing of; then she went round the room three times, burning incense; then she came up to me with a majestic air and looked at me in the face; finally she smiled very pleasantly and told me to wait for a reply in the antechamber."

CHAPTER 89

At ten o'clock in the morning, cheered by the pleasant feeling of being once more in that Paris which is so imperfect but which is the only true town in the world, I called on my dear Madame d'Urfé, who received me with open arms. She told me that the young Count d'Aranda was quite well and, if I liked, she would ask him to dinner the next day. I told her I should be delighted to see him, and then I informed her that the operation by which she was to become a man could not be performed till Querilinto, one of the three chiefs of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, was liberated from the dungeons of the Inquisition at Lisbon.

"This is the reason," I added, "that I am going in the course of the next month to Augsburg, where I shall confer with the Earl of Stormont as to the liberation of the adept, under the pretext of a mission from the Portuguese government. For these purposes I shall require a good letter of credit and some watches and snuffboxes to make presents with, as we have to win over certain of the profane."

"I will gladly see to all that, but you need not hurry, as the Congress will not meet till September."

"Believe me, it will never meet at all, but the ambassadors of the belligerent powers will be there all the same. If, contrary to my expectation, the Congress is held, I shall be obliged to go to Lisbon. In any case, I promise to see you again in the ensuing winter. The fortnight that I have to spend here will enable me to defeat a plot of St. Germain's."

"St. Germain! He would never dare to return to Paris."

"I am certain he is here in disguise. The state messenger who ordered him to leave London convinced him that the English minister had not been duped by the demand for his surrender made by the Comte d'Affri in the name of the King to the States-General."

All this was mere guesswork, and it will be seen that I guessed rightly.

Madame d'Urfé then congratulated me on the charming girl whom I had sent from Grenoble to Paris. Valenglard had told her the whole story.

"The King adores her," said she, "and before long she will make him a father. I have been to see her at Passy with the Duchess de Lauraguais."

"She will give birth to a son who will make France happy, and in thirty years' time you will see wondrous things, of which, unfortunately, I can tell you nothing until your transformation. Did you mention my name to her?"

"No, I did not; but I am sure you will be able to see her, if only at Madame Varnier's."

She was not mistaken; but shortly afterwards an event happened which made the madness of this excellent woman much worse. Towards

four o'clock, as we were talking over my travels and our designs, she took a fancy to walk in the Bois de Boulogne. She begged me to accompany her and I acceded to her request. We walked into the deepest recesses of the wood and sat down under a tree.

"It is eighteen years," said she, "since I fell asleep on the same spot that we now occupy. During my sleep the divine Horosmadis came down from the sun and stayed with me till I awoke. As I opened my eyes, I saw him leave me and ascend to Heaven. He left me with child and I bore a girl, which he took away from me ten years ago, no doubt to punish me for having so far forgotten myself as to love a mortal after him. My lovely Iriasis was like him."

• "You are quite sure that M. d'Urfé was not the child's father?"

"M. d'Urfé did not know me after he saw me lying beside the divine Anael."

"That's the genius of Venus. Did he squint?"

"To excess. You are aware, then, that he squints?"

"Yes, and I know that at the amorous crisis he ceases to squint."

"I did not notice that. He too left me on account of my sinning with an Arab."

"The Arab was sent to you by an enemy of Anael's, the genius of Mercury."

"It must have been so; it was a great misfortune."

"On the contrary, it rendered you more fit for transformation."

We were walking towards the carriage when all at once we saw St. Germain but, as soon as he noticed us, he turned back and we lost sight of him.

"Did you see him?" said I. "He is working against us, but our genie makes him tremble."

"I am quite thunderstruck. I will go and impart this piece of news to the Duc de Choiseul to-morrow morning. I am curious to hear what he will say when I tell him."

As we re-entered Paris, I left Madame d'Urfé and walked to the Porte St. Denis to see my brother. He and his wife received me with cries of joy. I thought the wife very pretty but very wretched, for Providence had not allowed my brother to prove his manhood and she was unhappily in love with him. I say "unhappily" because her love kept her faithful to him and, if she had not been in love, she might easily have found a cure for her misfortune, as her husband allowed her perfect liberty. She grieved bitterly, for she did not know that my brother was impotent and fancied that the reason of his abstention was that he did not return her love; and the mistake was an excusable one, for he looked like a Hercules and indeed he was one, except where it was most to be desired. Her grief threw her into a consumption, of which she died five or six years later. She did not mean her death to be a punishment to her husband but we shall see that it was so.

The next day I called on Madame Varnier to give her Madame Morin's letter. I was cordially welcomed and Madame Varnier was kind enough to say that she had rather see me than anybody else in

the world; her niece had told her such strange things about me that she had got quite curious. This, as is well known, is a prevailing complaint with women.

"You shall see my niece," she said, "and she will tell you all about herself."

She wrote her a note and put Madame Morin's letter into the same envelope.

"If you want to know what my niece's answer is," said Madame Varnier, "you must dine with me."

I accepted the invitation and she immediately told her servant that she was not at home to anyone.

The small messenger who had taken the note to Passy returned at four o'clock with the following epistle:

"The moment in which I see the Chevalier de Seingalt once more will be one of the happiest of my life. Ask him to be at your house at ten o'clock the day after to-morrow, and, if he can't come then, please let me know."

After reading the note and promising to keep the appointment, I left Madame Varnier and called on Madame du Romain, who told me I must spend a whole day with her, as she had several questions to put to my oracle.

Next day Madame d'Urfé told me the amusing reply she had from the Duc de Choiseul when she told him she had seen the Comte de St. Germain in the Bois de Boulogne.

"I should not be surprised," said the minister, "considering that he spent the night in my study."

The duke was a man of wit and a man of the world. He kept secrets only when they were really important ones; very differently from those make-believe diplomatists who think they give themselves importance by making a mystery of trifles of no consequence. It is true that the Duc de Choiseul very seldom thought anything of great importance; and, in point of fact, if there were less intrigue and more truth about diplomacy (as there ought to be), concealment would be rather ridiculous than necessary.

The duke had pretended to disgrace St. Germain in France that he might use him as a spy in London, but Lord Halifax was by no means taken in by this stratagem. However, all governments have the politeness to afford one another these services, so that none of them can reproach the others.

The small Comte d'Aranda, after caressing me affectionately, begged me to come and breakfast with him at his boarding-school, telling me that Mlle. Viar would be glad to see me.

The next day I took care not to fail in my appointment with the fair lady. I was at Madame Varnier's a quarter of an hour before the arrival of the dazzling brunette and I waited for her with a beating of the heart which showed me that the small favours she had given me had not quenched the flame of love. When she made her appearance, her plump figure filled me with respect, so that I did not feel as if I

could come forward and greet her tenderly; but she was far from thinking that more respect was due to her than when I had known her in Grenoble, poor but also pure. After kissing me affectionately, she told me as much.

"They think I am happy," said she, "and they envy my lot; but can one be happy after the loss of one's self-respect? For the last six months I have only smiled, not laughed; while in Grenoble I laughed heartily from true gladness. I have diamonds, lace, a beautiful house, a superb carriage, a lovely garden, waiting-maids and a maid of honour who perhaps despises me, and, although the highest Court ladies treat me like a princess, I do not pass a single day without experiencing some mortification."

"Mortification?"

"Yes; people come and bring pleas before me and I am obliged to send them away, as I dare not ask the King anything."

"Why not?"

"Because I cannot look on him as my lover only; he is always my sovereign, too. Ah! happiness is to be sought in simple homes, not in pompous palaces."

"Happiness is gained by complying with the duties of whatever condition of life one is in, and you must constrain yourself to rise to that exalted station in which destiny has placed you."

"I cannot do it; I love the King and am always afraid of vexing him. I am always thinking that he does too much for me, and thus I dare not ask for anything for others."

"But I am sure the King would be only too glad to show his love for you by benefiting the persons in whom you take an interest."

"I know he would and that thought makes me happy, but I cannot overcome my feeling of repugnance for asking favours. I have a hundred louis a month for pin money and I distribute it in alms and presents, but with due economy, so that I am not penniless at the end of the month. I have a foolish notion that the chief reason the King loves me is that I do not importune him."

"And do you love him?"

"How can I help it? He is good-hearted, kindly, handsome and polite to excess; in short, he possesses all the qualities to captivate a woman's heart. He is always asking me if I am pleased with my furniture, my clothes, my servants and my garden and if I desire anything altered. I thank him with a kiss and tell him that I am pleased with everything."

"Does he ever speak of the scion you are going to present to him?"

"He often tells me that, in my present condition, I ought to give special care to my health. I am hoping he will recognise my son as a prince of the blood; he ought in justice to do so, as the Queen is dead."

"To be sure he will."

"I should be very happy if I had a son. I wish I felt sure that I would have one. But I say nothing about this to anyone. If I dared

speak to the King about the horoscope, I am certain he would want to know you; but I am afraid of evil tongues."

"So am I. Continue in your discreet course and nothing will come to disturb your happiness, which may become greater and which I am pleased to have procured for you."

We did not part without tears. She was the first to go, after kissing me and calling me her best friend. I stayed a short time with Madame Varnier to compose my feelings, and I told her I should have married her niece instead of casting her horoscope.

"She would no doubt have been happier. You did not foresee, perhaps, her timidity and her lack of ambition."

"I can assure you that I did not reckon upon her courage or ambition. I laid aside my own happiness to think only of hers. But what is done cannot be recalled and I shall be consoled if I see her perfectly happy at last. I hope, indeed, she will be so, above all if she is delivered of a son."

I dined with Madame d'Urfé and we decided to send back d'Aranda to his boarding-school, that we might be more free to pursue our cabalistic operations, and afterwards I went to the opera, where my brother had made an appointment with me. He took me to sup at Madame Vanloo's, where I was received in the friendliest manner possible.

"You will have the pleasure of supping with Madame Blondel and her husband," said she.

The reader will recollect that Madame Blondel was Manon Baletti, whom I was to have married.

"Does she know I am coming?" I inquired.

"No, I have promised myself the pleasure of seeing her surprise."

"I am much obliged to you for not wishing to enjoy my surprise as well. We shall see each other again, but not to-day; so I must bid you farewell, for, as I am a man of honour, I hope never to be under the same roof as Madame Blondel again."

With this, I left the room, leaving everybody in astonishment and, not knowing where to go, I took a coach and went to sup with my sister-in-law, who was extremely glad to see me. But all through supper-time this charming woman did nothing but complain of her husband, saying that he had no business to marry her, knowing that he could not show himself a man.

"Why did you not make the trial before you married?"

"Was it for me to propose such a thing? How should I suppose that such a fine man was impotent? But I will tell you how it all happened. As you know, I was a dancer at the Comédie Italienne and I was the mistress of M. de Sauci, the ecclesiastical commissioner. He brought your brother to my house. I liked him and before long I saw that he loved me. My lover advised me that it was an opportunity to get married and make my fortune. With this idea I conceived the plan of not granting him any favours. He used to come and see me in the morning and often found me in bed; we talked together and his

passions seemed to be aroused, but it all ended in kissing. On my part, I was waiting for a formal declaration and a proposal of marriage. At that period M. de Sauci settled an annuity of a thousand crowns on me on condition that I leave the stage.

"In the spring M. de Sauci invited your brother to spend a month in his country house. I was of the party, but for propriety's sake it was agreed that I should pass as your brother's wife. Casanova enjoyed the idea, looking upon it as a jest and not thinking of the consequences. I was therefore introduced as his wife to my lover's family, as also to his relatives, who were judges, officers and men about town, and to their wives, who were all women of fashion. Your brother was in high glee that, to play our parts properly, we were obliged to sleep together. For my part, I was far from disliking the idea, or at all events I looked upon it as a short-cut to the marriage I desired.

"But how can I tell you? Though tender and affectionate in everything, your brother slept with me for a month without our attaining what seemed the natural result under the circumstances."

"Well, at last we went back to Paris, your brother to his house and I to mine, while he continued his courtship, and I could not understand what he meant by such strange behaviour. M. de Sauci, who knew that nothing serious had taken place between us, tried in vain to solve the enigma. 'No doubt he is afraid of getting you with child,' he said, 'and of thus being obliged to marry you.' I began to be of the same opinion, but I thought it a strange line for a man in love to take.

"M. de Nesle, an officer in the French Guards, who had a pretty wife I had met in the country, went to your brother's to call on me. Not finding me there, he asked why we did not live together. Your brother replied openly that our marriage had been a mere jest. M. de Nesle then came to me to inquire if this were the truth and, when he heard that it was, he asked me how I would like him to make Casanova marry me. I answered that I should be delighted, and that was enough for him. He went again to your brother and told him that his wife would never have associated with me on equal terms if I had not been introduced to her as a married woman; that the deceit was an insult to all the company at the country house which must be wiped out by his marrying me within the week or fighting a duel. M. de Nesle added that, if he fell, he would be avenged by all the gentlemen who had been offended in the same way. Casanova replied, laughing, that, so far from fighting to escape marrying me, he was ready to break a lance to get me. 'I love her,' he said, 'and, if she loves me, I am quite ready to give her my hand. Be kind enough,' he added, 'to prepare the way for me and I will marry her whenever you like.'

"M. de Nesle embraced him and promised to see to everything; he brought me the joyful news and in a week all was over. M. de Nesle gave us a splendid supper on our wedding day and since then I have had the title of wife. It is an empty title, however, for, despite the ceremony and the fatal 'yes,' I am no wife, as your brother is com-

pletely impotent. I am an unhappy wretch and it is all his fault, for he must have known his own condition. He has deceived me horribly."

"But he was forced into it; he is more to be pitied than to be blamed. I pity you also, but I think you are in the wrong, for, after his sleeping with you for a month, you might have guessed the truth. Even if you had been a perfect novice, M. de Sauci ought to have known what was the matter."

"All that seems very reasonable, but nevertheless neither of us thought of it; your brother looks such a Hercules."

"There are two remedies open to you: you can either have your marriage annulled or you can take a lover; and I am sure that my brother is too reasonable a man to offer any opposition to the latter course."

"I am perfectly free, but I can avail myself neither of a divorce nor of a lover, for the wretch treats me so kindly that I love him more and more, which doubtless makes my misfortune harder to bear."

The poor woman was so unhappy that I should have been delighted to console her, but it was out of the question. However, the mere telling of her story had afforded her some solace and, after kissing her in such a way as to convince her that I was not like my brother, I wished her good night.

The next day I called on Madame Vanloo, who informed me that Madame Blondel had charged her to thank me for having gone away, while her husband wished me to know that he was sorry not to have seen me in order to express his gratitude.

"He seems to have found his wife a maid, but that's no fault of mine; and Manon Baletti is the only person he ought to be grateful to. They tell me that he has a pretty baby and lives at the Louvre, while she has another house in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs."

"Yes, but he takes supper with her every evening."

"It's an odd way of living."

"I assure you it answers capitally. Blondel regards his wife as his mistress. He says that that keeps the flame of love alight and that, as he never had a mistress worthy of being his wife, he is delighted to have a wife worthy of being his mistress."

The next day I devoted entirely to Madame du Romain and we were occupied with knotty questions till the evening. I left her well pleased. The marriage of her daughter, Mlle. Cotenfau, with M. de Polignac, which took place five or six years later, was the result of our cabalistic calculations.

The fair stocking seller of the Rue des Prouvères, whom I had loved so well, was no longer in Paris. She had gone off with a M. de Langlade and her husband was inconsolable. Camille was ill. Coralline had become the titular mistress of the Comte de la Marche, son of the Prince de Conti, and the issue of this union was a son, whom I met twenty years later. He called himself the Chevalier de Montréal and wore the cross of the Knights of Malta. Several other girls I had

known were widowed and in the country or had become inaccessible in other ways.

Such was the Paris of my day. The actors on its stage changed as rapidly as the fashions.

I devoted a whole day to my old friend Baletti, who had left the theatre and married a pretty ballet girl on the death of his father, he was making experiments with a view to finding the Philosopher's Stone.

I was agreeably surprised at meeting the poet Poinciset at the Comédie Française. He embraced me again and again and told me that M. du Tillot had overwhelmed him with kindness at Parma

"He could not get me anything to do," said Poinciset, "because a French poet is rather at a discount in Italy."

"Have you heard anything of Lord Lismore?"

"Yes, he wrote to his mother from Leghorn, telling her that he was going to the Indies and that, if you had not been good enough to give him a thousand louis, he would have been imprisoned in Rome."

"His fate interests me extremely and I should be glad to call on milady with you."

"I will tell her you are in Paris and I am sure she will invite you to supper, for she has the greatest desire to talk to you."

"How are you getting on here? Are you still content to serve Apollo?"

"He is not the god of wealth by any means. I have no money and no room and I shall be glad of a supper if you will ask me. I will read you my play, *Le Cercle*, which has been accepted. I am sure it will be successful."

Le Cercle was a short prose play, in which the poet satirised the jargon of Dr. Herrenschwand, brother of the doctor I had consulted at Soleure. The play proved to be a great success.

I took Poinciset home to supper and the poor nursling of the Muses ate for four. In the morning he came to tell me that the Countess of Lismore expected me to supper.

I found the lady, still pretty, in company with her aged lover, M. de St. Aubin, Archbishop of Cambrai, who spent all the revenues of his see on her. This worthy prelate was one of the illegitimate children of the Duc d'Orléans, the famous Regent, by an actress. He supped with us but opened his mouth only to eat, and his mistress spoke only of her son, whose talents she lauded to the skies, though he was in reality a mere scamp; but I felt in duty bound to echo what she said. It would have been cruel to contradict her. I promised to let her know if I saw anything more of him.

Poinciset, who was heartless and homeless, as they say, spent the night in my room and in the morning I gave him two cups of chocolate and some money wherewith to get a lodging. I never saw him again, and a few years after he was drowned, not in the Hippocrene fountain, but in the Guadalquivir. He told me he had spent a week with M. de

Voltaire and that he had hastened his return to Paris to obtain the release of the Abbé Morellet from the Bastille.

I had nothing more to do in Paris, and I was only waiting for some clothes to be made and for a cross of the order with which the Holy Father had decorated me to be set with diamonds and rubies.

I was expecting everything to be finished in five or six days but an unfortunate incident obliged me to make a hasty departure. I am loth to write what follows, for it was all my own fault that I came near losing my life and my honour. I pity those simpletons who blame Fortune and not themselves for their misfortunes.

I was walking in the Tuileries at ten o'clock in the morning when I was unlucky enough to meet the Dangenancour and another girl. This Dangenancour was a dancer at the Opéra, whom I had desired to meet before my last departure from Paris. I congratulated myself on the lucky chance which threw her in my way, and I accosted her and had not much trouble in inducing her to dine with me at Choisy.

We walked towards the Pont Royal, where we took a coach. After dinner had been ordered, we were taking a turn in the garden when I saw a carriage stop and two adventurers whom I knew get out of it, with two girls, friends of the ones I had with me. The wretched landlady, who was standing at the door, said that, if we liked to sit down together, she could give us an excellent dinner, and I said nothing, or rather I assented to the "yes" of my two nymphs. The dinner was excellent and, after the bill was paid and we were on the point of returning to Paris, I noticed that a ring which I had taken off to show to one of the adventurers named Santis was still missing. It was an exceedingly pretty miniature and the diamond setting had cost me twenty-five louis. I politely begged Santis to return me the ring and he replied with the utmost coolness that he had done so already.

"If you had returned it," said I, "it would be on my finger and you see that it is not."

He persisted in his assertion; the girls said nothing, but Santis's friend, a Portuguese named Xavier, dared to tell me that he had seen the ring returned.

"You're a liar," I exclaimed, and without more ado I took hold of Santis by the collar and swore I would not let him go till he returned me my ring. The Portuguese rose to come to his friend's rescue, while I stepped back and drew my sword, repeating my determination not to let them go. The landlady came on the scene and began to shriek and Santis asked me to give him a few words aside. I thought in all good faith that he was ashamed to restore the ring before company but would give it me as soon as we were alone. I sheathed my sword and told him to come with me. Xavier got into the carriage with the four girls and they all went back to Paris.

Santis followed me to the back of the inn and then, assuming a pleasant smile, told me he had put the ring into his friend's pocket for a joke, but that I should have it back in Paris.

"That's an idle tale," I exclaimed. "Your friend said he saw you

return it; and now he has escaped me. Do you think I am green enough to be taken in by this sort of thing? You're a couple of robbers."

So saying, I stretched out my hand for his watch-chain, but he stepped back and drew his sword. I drew mine and we had scarcely crossed swords when he thrust and I, parrying, rushed in and ran him through and through. He fell to the ground, calling "Help!" I sheathed my sword and, without troubling myself about him, got into my coach and drove back to Paris.

I got down in the Place Maubert and walked by a circuitous way to my hotel. I was sure no one could have come after me there, as my landlord did not even know my name.

I spent the rest of the day in packing up my trunks and, after telling Costa to put them on my carriage, I went to Madame d'Urfé's. After I had told her of what had happened, I begged her, as soon as that which she had for me was ready, to send it to me at Augsburg by Costa. I should have told her to entrust it to one of her own servants, but my good genius had left me that day. Besides, I did not look upon Costa as a thief.

When I got back to the hotel, I gave the rascal his instructions, telling him to be quick and to keep his own counsel, and I then gave him money for the journey.

I left Paris in my carriage, drawn by four hired horses, which took me as far as the second post, and I did not stop till I got to Strasburg, where I found Désarmoises and my Spaniard.

There was nothing to keep me in Strasburg, so I wanted to cross the Rhine immediately; but Désarmoises persuaded me to come with him to see an extremely pretty woman who had delayed her departure for Augsburg only in the hope that we might journey there together.

"You know the lady," said the false marquis, "but she made me give my word of honour that I would not tell you. She has only her maid with her and I am sure you will be pleased to see her."

My curiosity made me give in. I followed Désarmoises and came into a room where I saw a nice-looking woman whom I did not recognise at first. I collected my thoughts and the lady turned out to be a dancer whom I had admired on the Dresden boards eight years before. She was then mistress to Count Brühl, but I had not even attempted to win her favour. She had an excellent carriage and, as she was ready to go to Augsburg, I immediately concluded that we could make the journey together very pleasantly.

After the usual compliments had passed, we decided on leaving for Augsburg the following morning. The lady was going to Munich, but, as I had no business there, we agreed that she should go by herself.

"I am quite sure," she said afterwards, "that you will come, too, for the ambassadors do not assemble at Augsburg till next September."

We supped together and next morning started on our way—she in her carriage with her maid and I in mine with Désarmoises, preceded by Le Duc on horseback. At Rastadt, however, we made a change, *la Renaud* (as she was called) thinking that she would give less op-

portunity for curious surmises by riding with me, while Désarmoises went with the servant. We soon became intimate. She told me about herself, or pretended to, and I told her all that I did not want to conceal. I informed her that I was an agent of the Court of Lisbon and she believed me, while, on my part, I believed that she was going to Munich and Augsburg only to sell her diamonds.

We began to talk about Désarmoises and she said that it was well enough for me to associate with him, but I should not countenance his styling himself "marquis."

"But," said I, "he is the son of the Marquis Désarmoises, of Nancy."

"No, he isn't, he is only a retired messenger, with a small pension from the Department of Foreign Affairs. I know the Marquis Désarmoises; he lives in Nancy and is not as old as our friend."

"Then one can't see how he can be Désarmoises's father."

"The landlord at the inn at Strasburg knew him when he was a messenger."

"How did you make his acquaintance?"

"We met at the table d'hôte. After dinner he came up to my room and told me he was waiting for a gentleman who was going to Augsburg and that we might make the journey together. He told me the name and, after questioning him, I concluded that the gentleman was yourself, so here we are and I am very glad of it! But listen to me; I advise you to drop all false styles and titles. Why do you call yourself Seingalt?"

"Because it's my name, but that doesn't prevent my old friends calling me Casanova, for I am both. You understand?"

"Oh, yes! I understand. Your mother is in Prague, and as she doesn't get her pension on account of the war, I am afraid she must be rather in difficulties."

"I know it, but I do not forget my filial duties. I have sent her some money."

"That's right. Where are you going to stay in Augsburg?"

"I shall take a house and, if you like, you shall be the mistress and do the honours."

"That would be delightful! We will give little suppers and play cards all night."

"Your program is an excellent one."

"I will see that you get a good cook; all the Bavarian cooks are good. We shall cut a fine figure and people will say we love each other madly."

"You must know, dearest, that I do not understand jokes at the expense of fidelity."

"You may trust me for that. You know how I lived at Dresden."

"I will trust you but not blindly, I promise you. And now let us address each other in the same way; you must call me 'tu.' You must remember we are lovers."

"Kiss me!"

The fair Renaud did not like travelling by night, she preferred to

eat a good supper, drink heavily and go to bed just as her head began to whirl. The heat of the wine made her into a Bacchante, hard to appease, but, when I could do no more, I told her to leave me alone and she had to obey.

When we reached Augsburg, we alighted at The Three Moors, but the landlord told us that, though he could give us a good dinner, he could not put us up, as the whole of the hotel had been engaged by the French ambassador. I called on M. Corti, the banker to whom I was accredited, and he soon got me a furnished house with a garden, which I took for six months. La Renaud liked it immensely.

No one had yet arrived at Augsburg. La Renaud contrived to make me feel that I should be lonely at Augsburg without her, and succeeded in persuading me to come with her to Munich. We put up at The Stag and made ourselves very comfortable, while Désarmoises went to stay somewhere else. As my business and that of my new mate had nothing in common, I gave her a servant and a carriage to herself and made myself the same allowance.

The Abbé Gama had given me a letter from the Commendatore Almada for Lord Stormont, the English ambassador to the Court of Bavaria. This nobleman being then in Munich, I hastened to deliver the letter. He received me very well and promised to do all he could as soon as he had time, as Lord Halifax had told him all about the matter. On leaving his Britannic lordship's, I called on M. de Folard, the French ambassador, and gave him a letter from M. de Choiseul. M. de Folard gave me a hearty welcome and asked me to dine with him the next day, and the day after introduced me to the Elector.

During the four fatal weeks I spent in Munich, the ambassador's house was the only one I frequented. I call these weeks "fatal" and with reason, for in them I lost all my money, I pledged jewels (which I never redeemed) to the amount of forty thousand francs and finally, what is worse, I lost my health. My assassins were La Renaud and Désarmoises, who owed me so much and paid me so badly.

The third day after my arrival I had to call on the Dowager Electress of Saxony. It was my brother-in-law, who was in her train, who made me go by telling me that it must be done, as she knew me and had been inquiring for me. I have no reason to repent of my politeness in going, as the Electress gave me a good reception and made me talk a great deal. She was extremely curious, like most people who have no employment and have not sufficient intelligence to amuse themselves.

I have done a good many foolish things in the course of my existence. I confess it as frankly as Rousseau and my *Memoirs* are not so egotistic as those of that unfortunate genius; but I never committed such an act of folly as I did when I went to Munich, where I had nothing to do. But it was a crisis in my life. My evil genius made me commit one folly after another since I left Turin. The evening at Lord Lisimore's, my connection with Désarmoises, my party at Choisy, my trust in Costa, my union with La Renaud and, worse than all, my folly in letting myself play at faro in a place where the knavery of the

gamesters is renowned all over Europe, followed one another in fatal succession. Among the players was the famous, or rather infamous, Afflisio, the friend of the Duc de Deux-Ponts, whom the duke called his aide-de-camp and who was known for the keenest rogue in the world.

I played every day and, as I often lost money on my word of honour, the necessity of paying the next day often caused me the utmost anxiety. When I had exhausted my credit with the bankers, I had recourse to the Jews, who require pledges, and in this Désarmoises and la Renaud were my agents, the latter finally making herself mistress of all my property. This was not the worst thing she did to me; for she gave me a disease which was devouring her interior parts but left no outward marks and was thus all the more dangerous; the freshness of her complexion seemed to indicate the most perfect health. In short, this serpent, who must have come from Hell to destroy me, had acquired such a mastery over me that she persuaded me she would be dishonoured if I called in a doctor during our stay in Munich, as everybody knew we were living together as man and wife.

I cannot imagine what had become of my wits to let myself be so beguiled, while every day I renewed the poison that she had poured into my veins.

My stay in Munich was a kind of curse; throughout that dreadful month I seemed to have a foretaste of the pains of the damned. La Renaud loved gaming and Désarmoises was her partner. I took care not to play with them, for the false marquis was an unmitigated cheat and often tricked with less skill than impudence. He asked disreputable people to my house and treated them at my expense; every evening scenes of a disgraceful character took place.

The Dowager Electress mortified me extremely by the way she addressed me on my last two visits to her.

"Everybody knows what kind of life you lead here and the way la Renaud behaves, possibly without your knowing it. I advise you to have done with her, as your reputation is suffering."

She did not know what a thralldom I was under. I had left Paris for a month and had heard from neither Madame d'Urfé nor Costa. I could not guess the reason, but I began to suspect my Italian's fidelity. I feared also lest my good Madame d'Urfé might be dead—or have come to her senses, which would have come to the same thing so far as I was concerned; and I could not possibly return to Paris to obtain the information which was so necessary both for calming my mind and for refilling my purse.

I was in a terrible state and my sharpest pang was that I began to experience a certain abatement of my vigour, the natural result of advancing years. I had no longer that daring born of youth and of the knowledge of one's strength, and I was not yet old enough to have learnt how to husband my forces. Nevertheless, I made an effort and took a sudden leave of my mistress, telling her I would await her in Augsburg. She did not try to detain me, but promised to rejoice me

as soon as possible; she was engaged in selling her jewellery. I set out, preceded by Le Duc, feeling very glad that Désarmoises had chosen to stay with the wretched woman to whom he had introduced me. When I reached my pretty house at Augsburg, I took to my bed, determined not to rise till I was cured or dead. M. Carli, my banker, recommended to me a doctor named Kephalides, a pupil of the famous Fayet, who had cured me of a similar complaint several years before. This Kephalides was considered the best doctor in Augsburg. He examined me and declared he could cure me by sudorifics without having recourse to the knife. He began his treatment by putting me on a severe regimen, ordering baths and applying mercury locally. I endured this treatment for six weeks, at the end of which time I found myself worse than at the beginning. I had become terribly thin and had two enormous inguinal tumours. I had to make up my mind to have them lanced but, though the operation nearly killed me, it did not make me any better. The surgeon was so clumsy as to cut the artery, causing a great loss of blood, which was arrested with difficulty and would have proved fatal if it had not been for the care of M. Algardi, a Bolognese doctor in the service of the prince-bishop of Augsburg.

I had had enough of Kephalides and Dr. Algardi prepared in my presence eighty-six pills containing eighteen grains of manna. I took one of these pills every morning, drinking a large glass of curds after it, and in the evening I had another pill with barley water, and this was the only sustenance I had. This heroic treatment gave me back my health in two months and a half, in which I suffered a great deal of pain; but I did not begin to put on flesh and get back my strength till the end of the year.

It was during this time that I heard about Costa's flight with my diamonds, watches, snuffboxes, linen, rich suits and a hundred louis which Madame d'Urfé had given him for the journey. The worthy lady sent me a bill of exchange for fifty thousand francs, which she had happily not entrusted to the robber, and the money rescued me very opportunely from the state to which my imprudence had reduced me.

At this period I made another discovery of an extremely vexatious character, namely, that Le Duc had robbed me. I would have forgiven him if he had not forced me to a public exposure, which I could have avoided only with the loss of my honour. However, I kept him in my service till my return to Paris at the commencement of the following year.

Towards the end of September, when everybody knew that the Congress would not take place, la Renaud passed through Augsburg with Désarmoises, on her way to Paris; but she dared not come and see me, for fear I should make her return my goods, of which she had taken possession without telling me. Four or five years later she married a man named Böhmer, the same that gave the Cardinal de Rohan the famous necklace, which he supposed was destined for the unfortunate Marie-Antoinette. La Renaud was in Paris when I returned, but I made no endeavour to see her, as I wished, if possible, to forget the

past. I had every reason to do so, for, amongst all the misfortunes I had gone through during that wretched year, the person I found most at fault was myself. Nevertheless, I would have given myself the pleasure of cutting off Désarmoises's ears, but the old rascal, foreseeing, no doubt, what kind of treatment I was likely to mete to him, made his escape. Shortly after he died miserably of consumption in Normandy.

My health had scarcely returned when I forgot all my woes and began once more to amuse myself. My excellent cook, Anna Midel, who had been idle so long, had to work hard to satisfy my ravenous appetite. My landlord and pretty Gertrude, his daughter, looked at me with astonishment as I ate, fearing some disastrous results. Dr. Algardi, who had saved my life, prophesied a dyspepsia which would bring me to the tomb, but my need of food was stronger than his arguments, to which I paid no kind of attention; and I was right, for I required an immense quantity of nourishment to recover my former state, and I soon felt in a condition to renew my sacrifices to the deity for whom I had suffered so much.

I fell in love with the cook and Gertrude, who were both young and pretty. I imparted my love to both of them at once, for I had foreseen that, if I attacked them separately, I should conquer neither. Besides, I felt that I had not much time to lose, as I had promised to sup with Madame d'Urfé on the first night of the year 1761 in a suite of rooms she had furnished for me in the Rue du Bac. She had adorned the rooms with superb tapestry made for René of Savoy, on which were depicted all the operations of the Great Work. She wrote to me that she had heard Santis had recovered from the wound I had given him and had been committed to the Bicêtre for fraud.

Gertrude and Anna Midel occupied my leisure moments agreeably enough during the rest of my stay in Augsburg, but they did not make me neglect society. I spent my evenings in a very agreeable manner with Count Max de Lamberg, who occupied the position of field-marshal to the prince-bishop. His wife had all the attractions which bring good company together. At this house I made the acquaintance of the Baron von Selentin, a captain in the Prussian service, who was recruiting for the King of Prussia at Augsburg. I was particularly drawn to the Count Lamberg by his taste for literature. He was an extremely learned man and had published some excellent works. I kept up a correspondence with him till his death by his own fault in 1792, four years from the time of my writing. I say "by his fault," but I should have said "by the fault of his doctors," who treated him mercurially for a disease which was not venereal, which treatment not only killed him but took away his good name.

His widow is still alive and lives in Bavaria, loved by her friends and her daughters, who all made excellent marriages.

At this time a miserable company of Italian actors made their appearance in Augsburg and I got them permission to play in a small and wretched theatre. As this was the occasion of an incident which

diverted me, the hero, I shall impart it to my readers in the hope of its amusing them also.

CHAPTER 90

A WOMAN, ugly but lively and talkative (like all Italians), called on me and asked me to intercede with the police to get permission for her company to act in Augsburg. In spite of her ugliness, she was a poor fellow countrywoman and, without asking her name, or ascertaining whether the company was good or bad, I promised to do my best and had no difficulty in obtaining the favour.

•I went to the first performance and saw to my surprise that the chief actor was a Venetian and had been a fellow student of mine twenty years before at St. Cyprian's College. His name was Bassi and, like myself, he had given up the priesthood. Fortune had made an actor of him and he looked wretched enough, while I, the adventurer, had a prosperous air.

I felt curious to hear his adventures and I was also actuated by that feeling of kindliness which draws one towards the companions of one's youthful, and especially one's school, days, so I went back-stage as soon as the curtain fell. He recognised me directly, gave a joyful cry and, after embracing me, introduced me to his wife, the woman who had called on me, and his daughter, a girl of thirteen or fourteen, whose dancing had delighted me. He did not stop here but, turning to his mates, of whom he was chief, introduced me to them as his best friend. These worthy people, seeing me dressed like a lord, with a cross on my breast, took me for a cosmopolitan charlatan who was expected at Augsburg, and Bassi, strange to say, did not deceive them. When the company had taken off its stage rags and put on its everyday rags, Bassi's ugly wife took me by the arm and said I must come and sup with her. I let myself be led and we soon got to just the kind of room I had imagined. It was a huge room on the ground floor, which served for kitchen, dining-room and bedroom all at once. In the middle stood a long table, part of which was covered with a cloth which looked as if it had been in use for a month, and at the other end of the room somebody was washing certain earthenware dishes in a dirty pan.

This den was lighted by one candle stuck in the neck of a broken bottle and, as there were no snuffers, Bassi's wife snuffed it cleverly with her finger and thumb, wiping her hand on the tablecloth after throwing the burnt wick on the floor. An actor with long mustaches, who played the villain in the various pieces, served an enormous dish of hashed-up meat swimming in a sea of dirty water dignified with the name of "sauce"; and the hungry family proceeded to tear pieces of bread off the loaf with their fingers or teeth and then dip them in the dish; but, as all did the same, no one had a right to be disgusted. A large pot of ale passed from hand to hand and with all this misery, mirth displayed itself on every countenance, and I had to ask myself,

what is happiness? For a second course there was a dish of fried pork, which was devoured with great relish. Bassi was kind enough not to press me to take part in this banquet and I felt obliged to him.

The meal over, he proceeded to impart to me his adventures, which were ordinary enough and like those which many a poor devil has to undergo; and, while he talked, his pretty daughter sat on my knee. Bassi brought his story to an end by saying that he was going to Venice for the carnival and was sure of making a lot of money. I wished him all the luck he could desire and, on his asking me what profession I followed, the fancy took me to reply that I was a doctor.

"That's a better trade than mine," said he, "and I am happy to be able to give you a valuable present."

"What is that?" I asked.

"The receipt for the Venetian Specific, which you can sell at two florins a pound, while it will cost you only four gros."

"I shall be delighted; but tell me, how is the treasury?"

"Well, I can't complain for a first night. I have paid all expenses and have given my actors a florin apiece. But I am sure I don't know how I am to play to-morrow, as the company has rebelled, they say they won't act unless I give each of them a florin in advance."

"They don't ask very much, however."

"I know that, but I have no money and nothing to pledge; but they will be sorry for it afterwards, as I am sure I shall make at least fifty florins to-morrow."

"How many are there in the company?"

"Fourteen, including my family. Could you lend me ten florins? I would pay you back to-morrow night."

"Certainly, but I should like to have you all to supper at the inn nearest to the theatre. Here are the ten florins."

The poor devil overflowed with gratitude and said he would order supper at a florin a head, according to my instructions. I thought the sight of fourteen famished actors sitting down to a good supper would be rather amusing.

The company gave a play the next evening but, as only thirty or at most forty people were present, poor Bassi did not know where to turn to pay for the lighting and the orchestra. He was in despair and, instead of returning my ten florins he begged me to lend him another ten, still in the hope of a good house next time. I consoled him by saying we would talk it over after supper and that I would go to the inn to wait for my guests.

I made the supper last three hours by dint of passing the bottle freely. My reason was that I had taken a great deal of interest in a young girl from Strasburg, who played singing chamber-maids. Her features were exquisite and her voice charming, while she made me split my sides laughing at her Italian pronounced with an Alsatian accent and at her gestures, which were of the most comic description.

I was determined to possess her in the course of the next twenty-four hours and, before the party broke up, I spoke as follows:

"We shall need some soldiers to look after the mob which will besiege the gallery, but as for the rest of the house . . ."

"Again I tell you, we shall see. Carry out my instructions and, whether they prove successful or not, we will have a merry supper as usual."

The next day I called upon the Harlequin in his little den of a room and, with two louis and a promise to respect his mistress, I made him as soft as a glove.

Bassi's bills made everybody laugh. People said he must be mad; but, when it was ascertained that it was the lessee's speculation and that I was the lessee, the accusation of madness was turned on me, but what did I care? At night the gallery was full an hour before the rise of the curtain, but the pit was empty and there was nobody in the boxes, with the exception of Count Lamberg, a Genoese abbé named Bolo and a young man who appeared to be a woman in disguise.

The actors surpassed themselves and the thunders of applause from the gallery enlivened the performance.

When we got to the inn, Bassi gave me three ducats for the three boxes, but of course I returned them to him; it was quite a little fortune for the poor actors. I sat down at table between Bassi's wife and his daughter, leaving the Alsatian to her lover. I told the manager to persevere in the same course and to let those laugh who would, and I made him promise to play all his best pieces.

When the supper and the wine had sufficiently raised my spirits, I devoted my attention to Bassi's daughter, who let me do what I liked, while her father and mother only laughed, and the silly Harlequin fretted and fumed at not being able to take the same liberties with his Dulcinea. But at the end of supper, when I had gone very far with my familiarities, Harlequin rose and, taking his sweetheart's arm, was going to lead her away. I imperiously told him to sit down and he obeyed me in amazement, contenting himself with turning his back. His sweetheart did not follow his example.

When the orgy was over, I emptied my purse on the table and enjoyed the eagerness with which they shared a score of sequins.

This indulgence at a time when I had not yet recovered my full strength made me enjoy a long sleep. Just as I awoke, I was handed a summons to appear before the burgomaster. I made haste with my toilette, for I felt curious to know the reason of this citation and I was aware I had nothing to fear. When I appeared, the magistrate addressed me in German, to which I turned a deaf ear, for I knew only enough of that language to ask for necessities. When he was informed of my ignorance of German, he addressed me in Latin, not of the Ciceronian kind by any means, but in that peculiar dialect which obtains at most of the German universities.

"Why do you bear a false name?" he asked.

"My name is not false. You can ask Carli, the banker, who paid me fifty thousand florins."

"I know that; but your name is Casanova, so why do you call yourself Seingalt?"

"I take this name, or rather have taken it, because it belongs to me and in such a manner that, if anyone else dared to take it, I should contest it as my property by every legitimate resource."

"Ah! and how does this name belong to you?"

"Because I invented it; but that does not prevent my being Casanova as well."

"Sir, you must choose between Casanova and Seingalt, a man cannot have two names."

"The Spaniards and Portuguese often have half a dozen names"

• "But you are not a Spaniard or a Portuguese; you are an Italian; and, after all, how can one invent a name?"

"It's the simplest thing in the world."

"Kindly explain."

"The alphabet belongs equally to the whole human race; no one can deny that. I took eight letters and combined them in such a way as to produce the word Seingalt. It pleased me and I have adopted it as my surname, being firmly persuaded that, as no one had borne it before, no one could deprive me of it or carry it without my consent."

"That is a very odd idea. Your arguments are specious, rather than well grounded, for your name ought to be none other than your father's name."

"I suspect that there you are mistaken; the name you yourself bear because your father bore it before you has not existed from all eternity, it must have been invented by an ancestor of yours who did not get it from his father, or else your name would have been Adam. Does your worship agree to that?"

"I am obliged to; but all this is strange, very strange."

"You are again mistaken. It's quite an old custom and I engage to give you by to-morrow a long list of names invented by worthy people still living, who are allowed to enjoy their names in peace and quietness without being cited to the town hall to explain how they got them."

"But you will confess that there are laws against false names?"

"Yes, but I repeat, this name is my true name. Your name, which I honour, though I do not know it, cannot be more true than mine, for it is possible that you are not the son of the gentleman you consider your father."

He smiled and escorted me out, telling me that he would make inquiries about me of M. Carli.

I was going to M. Carli's myself. The story made him laugh. He told me that the burgomaster was a Catholic, a worthy man, well-to-do but rather thick-headed—in short, a fine subject for a joke.

The following morning M. Carli asked me to breakfast and afterwards to dine with the burgomaster.

"I saw him yesterday," said he, "and we had a long talk, in the course

of which I succeeded in convincing him on the question of names and he is now quite of your opinion."

I accepted the invitation with pleasure, as I was sure of seeing some good company. I was not mistaken; there were some charming women and several agreeable men. Amongst others, I noticed the woman in man's dress I had seen at the theatre. I watched her at dinner and I was the more convinced that she was a woman. Nevertheless, everybody addressed her as a man and she played the part to admiration. I, however, being in search of amusement and not caring to seem as if I were taken in, began to talk to her in a strain of gallantry, as one talks to a woman, and I contrived to let her know that, if I was not sure of her sex, I had very strong suspicions. She pretended not to understand me and everyone laughed at my feigned expression of offence.

After dinner, while we were taking coffee, the pretended gentleman showed to a canon who was present a portrait on one of her rings. It represented a young lady who was in the company, and it was an excellent likeness—an easy enough matter, as she was very ugly. My conviction was not disturbed but, when I saw the impostor kissing the young lady's hand with mingled affection and respect, I ceased jesting on the question of her sex. M. Carli took me aside for a moment and told me that, in spite of his effeminate appearance, this individual was a man and was shortly going to marry the young lady whose hand he had just kissed.

"It may be so," said I, "but I can't believe it all the same."

However, the pair were married during the carnival and the husband obtained a rich dowry with his wife. The poor girl died of grief in the course of a year, but did not say a word till she was on her deathbed. Her foolish parents, ashamed of having been deceived so grossly, dared not say anything and got the female swindler out of the way; she had taken good care, however, to lay a firm hold on the dowry. The story became known and gave the good folk of Augsburg much amusement while I became renowned for my perspicacity in piercing the disguise.

I continued to enjoy the society of my table companions and of the fair Alsatian, who cost me a hundred louis. After a week my agreement with Bassi came to an end, leaving him some money in his pocket. He continued to give performances, returning to the usual prices and suppressing the free gallery. He did a very fair business.

I left Augsburg towards the middle of December.

I was vexed on account of Gertrude, who believed herself with child but could not make up her mind to accompany me to France. Her father would have been pleased for me to take her; he had no hopes of getting her a husband and would have been glad enough to get rid of her by making her my mistress.

We shall hear more of her in the course of five or six years, as also of my excellent cook, Anna Midel, to whom I gave a present of four hundred florins. She married shortly afterwards and, when I visited the town again, I found her unhappy.

I could not make up my mind to forgive Le Duc, who rode on the

coachman's box, and, when we were in Paris, half way along the Rue St. Antoine, I made him take his trunk and get down, and left him there without a letter of recommendation, in spite of his entreaties I never heard of him again, but I still miss him, for, in spite of his great failings, he was an excellent servant. Perhaps I should have remembered the important services he had rendered me at Stuttgart, Soleure, Naples, Florence and Turin; but I could not pass over his impudence in compromising me before the Augsburg magistrate. If I had not succeeded in bringing a certain theft home to him, it would have been laid to my door and I should have been dishonoured.

I had done a good deal in saving him from justice and, besides, had rewarded him liberally for all the special services he had done me.

From Augsburg I went to Bâle by way of Constance, where I stayed at the dearest inn in Switzerland. The landlord, Imhoff, was the prince of cheats, but his daughters were amusing, and after a three days' stay I continued my journey. I got to Paris on the last day of the year 1761 and left the coach at the house in the Rue du Bac, where my good angel Madame d'Urfé had arranged me a suite of rooms with the utmost elegance.

I spent three weeks in these rooms without going anywhere, in order to convince the worthy lady that I had returned to Paris only to keep my word to her and make her be born again a man.

We spent the three weeks in making preparations for this divine operation, our preparations consisting of devotions to each of the seven planets on the days consecrated to each of the intelligences. After this I had to seek, in a place which the spirits would point out to me, for a maiden, the daughter of an adept, whom I was to impregnate with a male child in a manner known only to the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. Madame d'Urfé was to receive the child into her arms the moment it was born and keep it beside her in bed for seven days. At the end of the seven days she would die with her lips on the lips of the child, who would receive her reasonable soul, whereas before it had possessed only a vegetal soul.

This being done, it was to be my part to care for the child with the *magisterium* which was known to me and, as soon as it had attained its third year, Madame d'Urfé would begin to recover her consciousness and then I was to begin to initiate her in the perfect knowledge of the Great Work.

The operation must take place under the full moon during the months of April, May or June. Above all, Madame d'Urfé was to make a will in favour of the child, whose guardian I was to be till its thirteenth year.

This sublime madwoman had no doubts whatever as to the truth of all this and burned with impatience to see the virgin who was destined to be the vessel of election. She begged me to hasten my departure.

I had hoped, in obtaining my answers from the oracle, that she would be deterred by the prospect of death, and I reckoned on the natural love of life making her defer the operation for an indefinite period. But

such was not the case and I found myself obliged to keep my word, in appearance at all events, and to go on my quest for the mysterious virgin.

What I wanted was some young hussy whom I could teach the part, and I thought of the Corticelli. She had been in Prague for the last nine months and, when we were at Bologna, I had promised to come to see her before the end of the year. But as I was leaving Germany—by no means a land of pleasant memories to me—I did not think it was worth while going out of my way for such a trifle in the depth of winter. I resolved to send her enough money for the journey and let her meet me in some French town.

M. de Fouquet, a friend of Madame d'Urfé, was governor of Metz and I felt sure that, with a letter of introduction from Madame d'Urfé, this nobleman would give me a distinguished reception. Besides, his nephew, the Comte de Lastic, whom I knew well, was there with his regiment. For these reasons I chose Metz as a meeting-place with the "virgin" Corticelli, to whom this new rôle would certainly be a surprise. Madame d'Urfé gave me the necessary instructions and I left Paris on January 25th, 1762, loaded with presents. I had a letter of credit to a large amount but did not make use of it, as my purse was abundantly replenished.

I took no servant, for, after Costa's robbing me and Le Duc's cheating me, I felt as if I could not trust anyone. I got to Metz in two days and put up at the Roi Dagobert, an excellent inn, where I found the Comte de Louvenhaupt, a Swede, whom I had met at the house of the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, mother of the Empress of Russia. He asked me to sup with him and the Duc de Deux-Ponts, who was travelling incognito to Paris to visit Louis XV, whose constant friend he was.

The day after my arrival I took my letters to the governor, who told me I must dine with him every day. M. de Lastic had left Metz, much to my regret, as he would have contributed in no small degree to the pleasure of my stay. The same day I wrote to the Corticelli, sending her fifty louis and telling her to come with her mother as soon as possible and to get someone who knew the way to accompany her. She could not leave Prague before the beginning of Lent and, to make sure of her coming, I promised that I would make her fortune.

In four or five days I knew my way about the town, but I did not frequent polite assemblies, preferring to go to the theatre, where a comic opera singer had captivated me. Her name was Raton and she was only fifteen, after the fashion of actresses, who always subtract at least two or three years from their age. However, this failing is common to women and is a pardonable one, since to be youthful is the greatest of all advantages to them. Raton was not so much handsome as attractive.

It was not long before I called 'on Raton, but, not wishing to be duped by her, I took due precautions. I told her she must come and

sup with me and I would give her the twenty-five louis if my happiness was complete.

I retained Raton at a louis a day till the arrival of the Corticelli and she had to be faithful to me, as I never let her out of my sight. I liked the girl so well and found her so pleasant that I was sorry that the Corticelli was coming; however, I was told of the latter's arrival one night just as I was leaving my box at the theatre. My footman told me in a loud voice that "Madame, my wife," my daughter and a gentleman had just arrived from Frankfort and were awaiting me at the inn.

"Idiot," I exclaimed, "I have no wife and no daughter."

• However, all Metz heard that my family had arrived.

The Corticelli threw her arms round my neck, laughing as usual, and her mother presented me to the worthy man who had accompanied them from Prague to Metz. He was an Italian named Monti, who had lived for a long time in Prague, where he taught his native language. I saw that M. Monti and the old woman were suitably accommodated and I then led the young rattle-pate into my room. I found her changed for the better; she had grown, her shape was improved and her pleasant manners made her a very charming girl.

CHAPTER 91

"WHY did you allow your mother to call herself my wife, little simpleton? Do you think that's a compliment to my judgment? She might have represented herself to be your governess, since she wishes to pass off as my daughter."

"My mother is an obstinate old woman who had rather be whipped at the cart-tail than call herself my governess. She has very narrow ideas and always thinks that 'governess' and 'procuress' mean the same thing."

"She's an old fool, but we will make her listen to reason, willy-nilly. But you are well dressed; have you made your fortune?"

"At Prague I captivated the affections of Count N— and he proved a generous lover. But let your first action be to send back home M. Monti. The worthy man has his family in Prague to look after; he can't afford to stay here long."

"True; I will see about it directly."

The coach started for Frankfort the same evening and, summoning Monti, I thanked him for his kindness and paid him generously, so he went off well pleased.

I had nothing further to do in Metz, so I took leave of my new friends and in two days' time I was at Nancy, where I wrote to Madame d'Urfé that I was on my way back with a virgin, the last of the family of Lascaris, who had once reigned at Constantinople. I begged her to receive her from my hands at a country house which belonged to her, where we should be occupied for some days in cabalistic ceremonies.

She answered that she would await us at Pont-Carré, an old castle four leagues distant from Paris, where she would welcome the young princess with all possible kindness.

"I owe her all the more friendship," added the sublime madwoman, "as the family of Lascaris is connected with the family of d'Urfé and I am to be born again in the seed of the happy virgin."

I felt that my task would be not exactly to throw cold water on her enthusiasm, but to hold it in check and to moderate its manifestations. I therefore explained to her by return of post that she must be content to treat the virgin as a countess, not a princess, and I ended by informing her that we should arrive, accompanied by the countess's governess, on the Monday of Holy Week.

I spent twelve days at Nancy, instructing the young madcap in the part she had to play and endeavouring to persuade her mother that she must content herself with being the Countess Lascaris's humble servant. It was a task of immense difficulty. It was not enough to show her that our success depended on her submitting; I had to threaten to send her back to Bologna by herself. I had good reason to repent of my perseverance. That woman's obstinacy was an inspiration of my good angel, bidding me avoid the greatest mistake I ever made.

On the day appointed we reached Pont-Carré. Madame d'Urfé, whom I had advised of the exact hour of our arrival, had the drawbridge of the castle lowered and stood in the archway in the midst of her people, like a general surrendering with all the honours of war. The dear lady, whose madness was but an excess of wit, gave the false princess so distinguished a reception that the latter would have shown her amazement if I had not forewarned her what to expect. Madame d'Urfé thrice clasped the girl to her breast with a tenderness quite maternal, calling her her "beloved niece" and explaining the entire pedigrees of the families of Lascaris and d'Urfé, to make the countess understand how she came to be her niece. I was agreeably surprised to see the polite and dignified air with which the Italian wench listened to all this, she did not even smile, though the scene must have struck her as extremely laughable.

As soon as we got into the castle, Madame d'Urfé proceeded to censure the newcomer, who received the attention with all the dignity of an opera queen and then threw herself into the arms of the priestess, who received her with enthusiastic affection.

At dinner the countess was agreeable and talkative, which won her Madame d'Urfé's entire favour, her broken French being easily accounted for. Laura, the countess's mother, knew only her native Italian and so kept silence. She was given a comfortable room, where her meals were brought to her and which she left only to hear mass.

The castle was a fortified building and had sustained several sieges in the civil wars. As its name, Pont-Carré, indicated, it was square and was flanked by four crenelated towers and surrounded by a broad moat. The rooms were vast and richly furnished in an old-fashioned way. The air was full of venomous gnats which devoured us and

covered our faces with painful bites; but I had agreed to spend a week there and I should have been hard put to it to find a pretext for shortening the time. Madame d'Urfé had a bed next to her own for her niece, but I was not afraid of her attempting to satisfy herself as to the countess's virginity, as the oracle had expressly forbidden her this under pain of failure. The operation was fixed for the fourteenth day of the April moon.

On that day we had a temperate supper, after which I went to bed. A quarter of an hour afterwards Madame d'Urfé came, leading the virgin Lascaris. She undressed her, scented her, cast a lovely veil over her body and, when the countess was laid beside me, she remained, wishing to be present at an operation which was to result in her being born again in the course of nine months.

After a certain time, Madame d'Urfé left us alone for the rest of the night, which was well employed. Thereafter the countess slept with her aunt till the last day of the moon, when I asked the oracle if the Countess Lascaris had conceived. That well might be, for nothing had been spared to that intent; but I thought it more prudent to make the oracle reply that the operation had failed because the small Count d'Aranda had watched us behind a screen. Madame d'Urfé was in despair, but I consoled her by a second reply, in which the oracle declared that, though the operation could be performed in France only in April, it could take place out of that realm in May; but the inquisitive young count, whose influence had proved so fatal, must be sent for at least a year to some place a hundred leagues from Paris. The oracle also indicated the manner in which he was to travel: he was to have a tutor, a servant and all in perfect order.

The oracle had spoken and no more was wanted. Madame d'Urfé thought of an abbé she liked for his tutor, and the count was sent to Lyons with strong letters of commendation to M. de Rochebaron, a relation of his patroness. The young man was delighted to travel and never had any suspicion of the way in which I had slandered him. It was not a mere fancy which suggested this course of action. I had discovered that the Corticelli was making up to him and that her mother favoured the intrigue. I had surprised her twice in the young man's room and, though he cared for the girl only as a youth cares for all girls, Signora Laura did not at all approve of my opposing her daughter's inclinations.

Our next task was to fix on some foreign town where we could again attempt the mysterious operation. We settled on Aix-la-Chapelle and in five or six days all was ready for the journey.

The Corticelli, angry with me for having thwarted her in her projects, reproached me bitterly and from that time began to be my enemy; she even allowed herself to threaten me if I did not get back "the pretty boy," as she called him.

"You have no business to be jealous," said she, "and I am mistress of my own actions."

"Quite right, my dear," I answered, "but it is my business to see that you do not behave like a prostitute in your present position."

The mother was in a furious rage and said that she and her daughter would return to Bologna, and to quiet them I promised to take them there myself as soon as we had been to Aix-la-Chapelle.

Nevertheless, I did not feel at ease and, to prevent any plots taking place, I hastened our departure.

We started in May in a travelling carriage containing Madame d'Urfé, myself, the false Lascaris and her maid and favourite named Brougnole. We were followed by a coach with two seats; in it were Signora Laura and another servant. Two menservants in full livery sat on the outside of our travelling carriage. We stopped a day at Brussels and another at Liège. At Aix there were many distinguished visitors and, at the first ball we attended, Madame d'Urfé presented the Lascaris to two princesses of Mecklenburg as her niece. The false countess received their embraces with much ease and modesty and attracted the particular attention of the Margrave of Bayreuth and the Duchess of Würtemberg, his daughter, who took possession of her and did not leave her till the end of the ball. I was on pins and needles the whole time, in terror lest the heroine might make some dreadful slip. She danced so gracefully that everybody gazed at her and I was the person who was complimented on her performance. I suffered a martyrdom, for these compliments seemed to me given with malicious intent. I suspected that the ballet girl had been discovered beneath the countess, and I felt myself dishonoured. I succeeded in speaking privately to the young wanton for a moment and begged her to dance like a young lady and not like a chorus girl; but she was proud of her success and dared to tell me that a young lady might know how to dance as well as a professional dancer and that she was not going to dance badly to please me. I was so enraged with her impudence that I would have cast her off that instant if it had been possible, but, as it was not, I determined that her punishment should lose none of its sharpness by waiting; and, whether it be a vice or a virtue, the desire for revenge is never extinguished in my heart until it has been satisfied.

The day after the ball Madame d'Urfé presented the "countess" with a casket containing a beautiful watch set with brilliants, a pair of diamond earrings and a ring containing a ruby of fifteen carats. The whole was worth sixty thousand francs. I took possession of it to prevent her going off without my leave.

In the meantime I amused myself with play and with making bad acquaintances. The worst of all was a French officer named d'Aché, who had a pretty wife and a daughter prettier still. Before long the daughter had taken possession of the heart which the Corticelli had lost, but, as soon as Madame d'Aché saw that I preferred her daughter to herself, she refused to receive me at her house.

I had lent d'Aché ten louis and I consequently felt myself entitled to complain of his wife's conduct, but he answered rudely that as I

went to the house only after his daughter, his wife was quite right, that he intended his daughter to make a good match and that, if my intentions were honourable, I had only to speak to the mother. His manner was even more offensive than his words and I felt enraged but, knowing the brutal characteristics of the man and that he was always ready to draw cold steel for a "yes" or a "no," I was silent and resolved to forget the girl, not caring to become involved with a man like her father.

I had almost cured myself of my fancy when, a few days after our conversation, I happened to go into a billiard room where d'Aché was playing with a Swiss named Schmit, an officer in the Swedish army. As soon as d'Aché saw me, he asked whether I would lay the ten louis he owed me against him.

"Yes," said I, "that will make double or quits."

Towards the end of the match d'Aché made an unfair stroke which was so evident that the marker told him of it; but, as this stroke made him the winner, d'Aché seized the stakes and put them in his pocket without heeding the marker or the other player, who, seeing himself cheated before his very eyes, gave the rascal a blow across the face with his cue. D'Aché parried the blow with his hand and, drawing his sword, rushed at Schmit, who had no arms. The marker, a sturdy young fellow, caught hold of d'Aché round the body and thus prevented murder. The Swiss went out saying, "We shall see each other again."

The rascally Frenchman cooled down and said to me, "Now, you see, we are quits."

"Very much quits."

"That's all very well; but by God! you might have prevented the insult which has dishonoured me."

"I might have done so, but I did not care to interfere. You are strong enough to look after yourself. Schmit had not his sword but I believe him to be a brave man, and he will give you satisfaction if you will return him his money, for there can be no doubt that you lost the match."

An officer named de Pyène took me up and said that he himself would give me the twenty louis which d'Aché had taken, but that the Swiss must give satisfaction. I had no hesitation in promising that he would do so, and said I would bring a reply to the challenge the next morning.

I had no fears myself. The man of honour ought always to be ready to use the sword to defend himself from insult or to give satisfaction for an insult he has offered. I know that the law of duelling is a custom which may be called (and perhaps rightly) barbarous, but it is a custom which no man of honour can contend against, and I believed Schmit to be a thorough gentleman.

I called on him at daybreak and found him still in bed. As soon as he saw me, he said:

"I am sure you have come to ask me to fight with d'Aché. I am quite ready to burn powder with him, but he must first pay me the twenty louis he robbed me of."

"You shall have them to-morrow and I will attend you. D'Aché will be seconded by M. de Pyène."

"Very good. I shall expect you at daybreak."

Two hours after I saw de Pyène and we fixed the meeting for the next day at six o'clock in the morning. The arms were to be pistols. We chose a garden half a league from the town as the scene of the combat.

At daybreak I found the Swiss waiting for me at the door of his lodgings, carolling the *ranz-des-vaches* so dear to his fellow countrymen. I thought that a good omen.

"Here you are," said he. "Let us be off then."

On the way he observed, "I have fought only with men of honour up to now and I don't much care for killing a rascal; it's hangman's work."

"I know," I replied, "that it's very hard to have to risk one's life against a fellow like that."

"There's no risk," said Schmit, with a laugh. "I am certain that I shall kill him."

"How can you be certain?"

"I shall make him tremble."

He was right. This secret is infallible when it is applied to a coward. We found d'Aché and de Pyène on the field and five or six others who must have been present from motives of curiosity.

D'Aché took twenty louis from his pocket and gave them to his enemy, saying, "I may be mistaken, but I hope to make you pay dearly for your vulgarity." Then turning to me, he said, "I owe you twenty louis also." But I made no reply.

Schmit put the money in his purse with the calmest air imaginable and, making no reply to the other's boast, placed himself between two trees distant about four paces from one another and, drawing two pistols from his pocket, said to d'Aché:

"Place yourself at a distance of ten paces and fire first. I shall walk to and fro between these two trees and you may walk back and forth likewise, if you wish, when my turn comes to fire."

Nothing could be clearer or more calmly delivered than this explanation.

"But we must decide," said I, "who is to have the first shot"

"There is no need," said Schmit. "I never fire first; besides, the gentleman has a right to the first shot."

De Pyène placed his friend at the proper distance and then stepped aside and d'Aché fired on his antagonist, who was walking slowly to and fro without looking at him. Schmit turned round in the coolest manner possible and said:

"You have missed me, sir; I knew you would. Try again."

I thought he was mad and that some arrangement would be come to, but nothing of the kind. D'Aché fired a second time and again missed; and Schmit, without a word but as calm as death, fired his first pistol in the air and then, covering d'Aché with his second pistol,

hit him in the forehead and stretched him dead on the ground. He put back his pistols into his pocket and went off directly by himself, as if he were merely continuing his walk. In two minutes I followed his example, after ascertaining that the unfortunate d'Aché no longer breathed.

I was in a state of amazement. Such a duel was more like a combat of romance than a real fact. I could not understand it; I had watched the Swiss and had not noticed the slightest change pass over his face.

I breakfasted with Madame d'Urfé, whom I found inconsolable. It was the full moon and at three minutes past four exactly I was to perform the mysterious creation of the child in which she was to be born again. But the Lascaris, on whom the work was to be wrought, was twisting and turning in her bed, feigning convulsions so that it should be impossible for me to accomplish the prolific work.

My grief when I heard what had happened was hypocritical, in the first place because I no longer felt any desire for the girl, and in the second because I thought I saw a way in which I could make use of the incident to take vengeance on her.

I lavished consolations on Madame d'Urfé and, on consulting the oracle, found that the Lascaris had been defiled by an evil genius and that I must search for another virgin whose purity must be under the protection of more powerful spirits. I saw that my madwoman was perfectly content with this, and I left her and visited the Corticelli, whom I found in bed, with her mother beside her.

"You have convulsions, have you, dearest?" said I.

"No, I haven't. I am quite well, but all the same I shall have them till you give me back my jewel casket."

"You are getting naughty, my poor child; this comes of following your mother's advice. As for the casket, if you are going to behave like this, probably you will never have it."

"I will reveal all."

"You will not be believed and I shall send you back to Bologna without letting you take any of the presents which Madame d'Urfé has given you."

"You will have to give me back the casket when I declare myself with child—as indeed I am."

Signora Laura told me that this was only too true, though I was not the father.

"Who is, then?" I asked.

"Count N—, whose mistress she was in Prague."

It did not seem probable, as she had no symptoms of pregnancy; still it might be so. I was obliged to plot myself in order to bring the plots of these two rascally women to nought and, without saying anything to them, I shut myself up with Madame d'Urfé to inquire of the oracle concerning the operation which was to make her happy.

After several answers, more obscure than any returned from the oracular tripod at Delphi and the interpretation of which I left to the infatuated Madame d'Urfé, she discovered herself—and I took care

not to contradict her—that the Countess Lascaris had gone mad. I encouraged her fears and succeeded in making her obtain from a cabalistic pyramid the statement that the reason the princess had not conceived was that she had been defiled by an evil genius, hostile to the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. This put Madame d'Urfé fairly on the way and she added on her own account that the girl must be with child by a gnome.

She then erected another pyramid to obtain guidance on our quest and I so directed things that the answer came that she must write to the moon.

This mad reply, which should have brought her to her senses, only made her more crazy than ever. She was quite ecstatic and I am sure that, if I had endeavoured to show her the nothingness of all this, I should have had nothing for my pains. Her conclusion would probably have been that I was possessed by an evil spirit and was no longer a true Rosy Cross. But I had no idea of undertaking a cure which would have done me harm and done her no good. Her chimerical notions made her happy and the cold, naked truth would doubtless have made her miserable.

She received the order to write to the moon with all the more delight as she knew what ceremonies were to be observed in addressing that planet, but she could not dispense with the assistance of an adept and I knew she would reckon on me. I told her I should always be ready to serve her, but that, as she knew herself, we would have to wait for the first phase of the new moon. I was very glad to gain time, for I had lost heavily at play and could not leave Aix-la-Chapelle before a bill which I had drawn on M. d'O— of Amsterdam was cashed. In the meantime we agreed that, as the Countess Lascaris had become mad, we must not pay any attention to what she might say, as the words would not be hers, but would proceed from the evil spirit that possessed her.

Nevertheless, we determined that, as her state was a pitiable one and should be alleviated as much as possible, she should continue to dine with us but in the evening she was to go to her governess and sleep with her.

After having thus disposed Madame d'Urfé to disbelieve whatever the Corticelli might tell her and to concentrate all her energies on the task of writing to Selenis, the intelligence of the moon, I set myself seriously to work to regain the money I had lost at play, and here my cabala was no good to me. I pledged the Corticelli's casket for a thousand louis and proceeded to play in an English club, where I had a much better chance of winning than with Germans or Frenchmen.

Three or four days after d'Aché's death his widow wrote me a note begging me to call on her. I found her in company with de Pyène. She told me in a lugubrious voice that her husband had left many debts unsettled and his creditors had seized everything she possessed and that she was thus unable to pay the expenses of a journey, though she

wanted to take her daughter with her to Colmar and there rejoin her family.

"You caused my husband's death," she added, "and I ask you to give me a thousand crowns, if you refuse me, I shall commence a lawsuit against you, for, as the Swiss officer has left, you are the only person I can prosecute."

"I am surprised at your taking such a tone towards me," I replied coldly, "and, were it not for the respect I feel for your misfortune, I should answer as bitterly as you deserve. In the first place, I have not a thousand crowns to throw away and, if I had, I would not give up my money under threats. I am curious to know what kind of case you could get up against me in the courts of law. As for Schmit, he fought like a brave man and a gentleman and I don't think you could get much out of him even if he were still here. Good day, madame."

I had scarcely got fifty paces from the house when I was joined by de Pyène, who said that, rather than that Madame d'Aché should have to complain of me, he would cut my throat on the spot. We neither of us had swords.

"Your intention is not a very flattering one," said I, "and there is something rather brutal about it. I had rather not have any affair of the kind with a man whom I don't know and to whom I owe nothing."

"You are a coward."

"I would be, you mean, if I were to imitate you. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what opinion you may have on the subject."

"You will be sorry for this."

"Maybe, but I warn you that I never go out without a pair of pistols, which I keep in good order and know how to use." So saying, I showed him the pistols and raised the trigger of the one in my right hand.

At this, the bully uttered an oath and we separated.

At a short distance from the place where this scene had occurred, I met a Neapolitan named Maliterni, a lieutenant-colonel and aide to the Prince de Condé, commander-in-chief of the French army. This Maliterni was a jolly companion, always ready to oblige and always short of money. We were friends and I told him what had happened.

"I should be sorry," said I, "to have anything to do with a fellow like de Pyène and, if you can rid me of him, I promise you a hundred crowns."

"I daresay that can be managed," he replied, "and I will tell you what I can do to-morrow."

In point of fact, he brought me news the next day that my cut-throat had received orders from his superior officer to leave Aix-la-Chapelle at daybreak, and at the same time he gave me a passport from the Prince de Condé.

I confess that this was very pleasant tidings. I have never feared to cross my sword with any man, though I never sought the barbarous pleasure of spilling men's blood; but on this occasion I felt an extreme

dislike to a duel with a fellow who was probably of the same caste as his friend d'Aché.

I therefore gave Maliterni my heartiest thanks, as well as the hundred crowns I had promised him, which I considered so well employed that I did not regret their loss.

Maliterni, who was a jester of the first water and a creature of the Marshal d'Estrées, was lacking in neither wit nor knowledge, but he was deficient in a sense of order and somewhat, perhaps, in refinement. He was a pleasant companion, for his gaiety was inexhaustible and he had a wide knowledge of the world. He attained the rank of field-marshal in 1768 and went to Naples to marry a rich heiress, whom he left a widow a year after.

The day after de Pyène's departure I received a note from Mlle. d'Aché, begging me, in the name of her sick mother, to come to see her. I answered that I would be at such-and-such a place at a given time and that she could say what she liked to me there.

I found her at the place and time appointed, with her mother, whose illness, it appeared, did not prevent her from going out. She called me her "persecutor" and said that, since the departure of her best friend, de Pyène, she did not know where to turn, that she had pledged all her belongings and that I, who was rich, ought to aid her, if I were not the lowest of men.

"I feel for your condition," I replied, "as I feel your abuse of me, and I cannot help saying that you have shown yourself the lowest of women in inciting de Pyène, who may be an honorable man for all I know, to assassinate me. In fine, rich or not, and though I owe you nothing, I will give you enough money to take your property out of pawn and I may possibly take you to Colmar myself, but you must first consent to my giving your charming daughter a proof of my affection."

"And you dare to make this horrible proposal to me?"

"Horrible or not, I do make it."

"I will never consent."

"Good day, madame."

I called the waiter, to pay him for the refreshments I had ordered, and I gave the girl six double louis, but her proud mother forbade her to accept the money from me. I was not surprised, in spite of her distress; for the mother was in reality still more charming than the daughter and she knew it. I ought to have given her the preference and thus have ended the dispute, but who can account for his whims? I felt that she must hate me, for she did not care for her daughter and it must have humiliated her bitterly to be obliged to regard her as a victorious rival.

I left them, taking away the six double louis which pride or scorn had refused, and I went to the faro table and decided to sacrifice them to Fortune, but that capricious deity, as proud as the haughty widow, refused them and, though I left them on the board for five deals, I almost broke the bank. An Englishman named Martin offered to go

shares with me and I accepted, as I knew he was a good player; and in the course of eight or ten days we did such good business that I was not only able to take the casket out of pledge and cover all losses, but made a considerable profit in addition.

About this period the Corticelli, in her rage against me, had told Madame d'Urfé the whole history of her life, of our acquaintance and of her pregnancy. But, the more truthfully she told her story, so much the more did the good lady believe her to be mad, and we often laughed together at the extraordinary fancies of the traitress. Madame d'Urfé put all her trust in the instructions which Selenis would give in reply to her letter.

Nevertheless, as the girl's conduct displeased me, I made her eat her meals with her mother, while I kept Madame d'Urfé company. I assured her that we should easily find another vessel of election, the madness of the Countess Lascaris having made her absolutely incapable of participating in our mysterious rites.

Before long d'Aché's widow found herself obliged to give me her Mimi, but I won her with kindness and in such a way that the mother could pretend with decency to know nothing about it. I redeemed all the goods she had pawned and, although the daughter had not yet yielded entirely to my ardour, I formed the plan of taking them to Colmar with Madame d'Urfé. To make up the good lady's mind, I resolved to let that be one of the instructions from the moon and thus she would not only obey blindly but would have no suspicions as to my motive.

I managed the correspondence between Selenis and Madame d'Urfé in the following manner:

On the day appointed we supped together in a garden beyond the town walls, and in a room on the ground floor of the house I had made all the necessary preparations, the letter which was to fall from the moon in reply to Madame d'Urfé's epistle being in my pocket. At a little distance from the chamber of ceremonies I had placed a large bath, filled with lukewarm water and perfumes pleasing to the deity of the night, into which we were to plunge at the hour of the moon, which fell at one o'clock.

When we had burnt incense and sprinkled the essences appropriate to the cult of Selenis, we took off all our clothes and, holding the letter concealed in my left hand, with my right I graciously led Madame d'Urfé to the brink of the bath. Here stood an alabaster cup containing spirits of wine, which I kindled, repeating magical words I did not understand but which she recited after me as she handed me the letter addressed to Selenis. I burnt the letter in the flame of the spirits beneath the light of the moon and the credulous lady told me she saw the characters she had traced ascending in the rays of the planet.

We then got into the bath and the reply, which was written in silver characters on green paper, appeared on the surface of the water in the course of ten minutes. As soon as Madame d'Urfé saw it, she picked it up reverently and got out of the bath with me.

We dried and scented ourselves and proceeded to put on our clothes. As soon as we were in a state of decency, I told Madame d'Urfé she might read the epistle, which she had placed on a scented silk cushion. She obeyed and I saw sadness visibly expressed on her features when she read that her hypostasis was deferred till the arrival of Querilinthus, whom she would see with me at Marseilles in the spring of the next year. The genius also said that the Countess Lascaris could now only do her harm and that she should consult me as to the best means of getting rid of her. The letter ended by ordering her not to leave at Aix a lady who had lost her husband and had a daughter who was destined to be of great service to the fraternity of the R. C. She was to take them to Alsace and not to leave them till they were there and safe from the danger which threatened them if they were left to themselves.

Madame d'Urfé, who with all her folly was an exceedingly benevolent woman, commended the widow to my care enthusiastically and seemed impatient to hear her whole history. I told her all the circumstances that I thought would strengthen her in her resolution to befriend them, and promised to introduce the ladies to her at the first opportunity.

We returned to Aix and spent the night in discussing the phantoms which coursed through her brain. All was going along well and my only care was for the journey to Alsace and how to obtain the complete enjoyment of Mimi after having so well deserved her favours.

I had a run of luck at play the next day and in the evening I gave Madame d'Aché an agreeable surprise by telling her that I would accompany her and her Mimi to Colmar. I told her that I should begin by introducing her to the lady whom I had the honour to accompany and I begged her to be ready by the next day, as the marchioness was impatient to see her. I could see that she could scarcely believe her ears, for she thought Madame d'Urfé was in love with me and she could not understand her desire to make the acquaintance of two ladies who might be dangerous rivals.

I conducted them to Madame d'Urfé at the appointed hour and they were received with a warmth which surprised them exceedingly, for they could not be expected to know that their recommendation came from the moon. We made a party of four and, while the two ladies talked together in the fashion of ladies who have seen the world, I paid Mimi particular attention, which her mother understood very well but which Madame d'Urfé attributed to the young lady's connection with the Rosy Cross.

In the evening we all went to a ball and there the Corticelli, who was always trying to annoy me, danced as no proper young lady would dance. She executed rapid steps, pirouetted, cut capers and showed her legs; in short, she behaved like a ballet girl. I was in torment. An officer who did not know, or pretended not to know, my supposed relation to her asked me if she was a professional dancer. I heard another man behind me say that he thought he remembered seeing her on the stage in Prague. I resolved to hasten my departure, as I foresaw that,

if I stayed much longer at Aix, the wretched girl would end by costing me my life.

As I have said, Madame d'Aché had the manners of good society and this put her in Madame d'Urfé's good graces, who saw in her politeness a new proof of the favour of Selenis. Madame d'Aché felt, I suppose, that she owed me some return after all I had done for her, and she left the ball early, so that, when I took Mimi home, I found myself alone with her and at perfect liberty to do what I liked. I profited by the opportunity and remained with Mimi for two hours, finding her so complaisant and even passionate that, when I left her, I had nothing more to desire.

In three days' time I provided the mother and daughter with their outfit and we left Aix gladly in an elegant and convenient travelling carriage which I had provided. Half an hour before we left, I made an acquaintance which afterwards proved disastrous to me. A Flemish officer unknown to me accosted me and painted his destitute condition in such sad colours that I felt obliged to give him twelve louis. Ten minutes after he gave me a paper in which he acknowledged the debt and named the time in which he would pay it. From the paper I ascertained that his name was Malingan. In ten months the reader will hear the rest of the story.

Just as we were starting, I motioned the Corticelli to a carriage with four places, in which she, her mother and the two maids were to travel. At this she trembled, her pride was wounded and for a moment I thought she was going out of her mind; she rained sobs, abuse and curses on me. I stood the storm unmoved, however, and Madame d'Urfé only laughed at her niece's paroxysms and seemed delighted to find herself sitting opposite to me with the servant of Selenis beside her, while Mimi was highly pleased to be so close to me.

We got to Liège at nightfall on the next day and, wishing to get horses to take us through the Ardennes and thus have the charming Mimi longer in my possession, I contrived to make Madame d'Urfé stay there the day following.

I rose early and went out to see the town. By the great bridge a woman, so wrapped up in a black mantilla that only the tip of her nose was visible, accosted me and asked me to follow her into a house with an open door which she showed me.

"As I have not the pleasure of knowing you," I replied, "prudence will not allow me to do so."

"You do know me, though," she replied and, taking me to the corner of a neighbouring street, she showed me her face. What was my surprise to see the fair Stuard of Avignon, the "statue" of the Fountain of Vaucluse! I was very glad to meet her.

In my curiosity I followed her into the house to a room on the second floor, where she welcomed me most tenderly. It was all no good, for I felt angry with her and despised her advances—no doubt because I had Mimi and wished to keep all my love for her. However, I took three

louis out of my purse and gave them to her, asking her to tell me her story.

"Stuard," she said, "was only my keeper; my real name is Ransom and I am the mistress of a rich landed proprietor. I got back to Liège after many sufferings."

"I am delighted to hear that you are more prosperous now, but it must be confessed that your behaviour at Avignon was both preposterous and absurd. But the subject is not worth discussing. Good day, madame."

I then returned to my hotel to write an account of what I had seen to the Marquis Grimaldi

The next day we left Liège and were two days passing through the Ardennes. This is one of the strangest tracts in Europe, a vast forest, the traditions of which furnished Ariosto with some splendid passages.

There is no town in the forest and, though one is obliged to cross it to pass from one country to another, hardly any of the necessities of life are to be found in it.

The inquirer will seek in vain for vices or virtues or manners of any kind. The inhabitants are devoid of correct ideas but have wild notions of their own on the power of men they style "scholars." It is enough to be a doctor to enjoy the reputation of an astrologer and a wizard. Nevertheless the Ardennes have a large population, as I was assured that there were twelve hundred churches in the forest. The people are good-hearted and even pleasant, especially the young girls; but as a general rule "the fair sex" is by no means fair in those quarters. In this vast district watered by the Meuse is the town of Bouillon, a regular hole, but in my time it was the freest place in Europe. The Duke of Bouillon was so jealous of his rights that he preferred the exercise of his prerogatives to all the honours he might have enjoyed at the Court of France. We stayed a day at Metz but did not call on anyone, and in three days we reached Colmar, where we left Madame d'Aché, whose good graces I had completely won. Her family, in extremely comfortable circumstances, received the mother and daughter with great affection. Mimi wept bitterly when I left her, but I consoled her by saying that I would come back before long. Madame d'Urfé seemed not to mind leaving them and I consoled myself easily enough. While congratulating myself on having made mother and daughter happy, I worshipped the secret ways of Divine Providence.

On the following day we went to Sulzbach, where the Baron of Schaumburg, who knew Madame d'Urfé, gave us a warm welcome. I should have been sadly bored in this dull place if it had not been for the gaming. Madame d'Urfé, finding herself in need of company, encouraged the Corticelli to hope to regain my good graces and, consequently, hers also. The wretched girl, seeing how easily I had defeated her projects and to what a pass of humiliation I had brought her, had changed her rôle and was now submissive enough. She flattered herself that she would regain the favour she had completely lost, and she thought the day was won when she saw that Madame d'Aché and her

daughter were remaining at Colmar. But what she had more at heart than either my friendship or Madame d'Urfé's was the jewel casket, but she dared not ask for it and her hopes of seeing it again were growing dim. By her pleasantries at table, which made Madame d'Urfé laugh, she succeeded in giving me a few amorous twinges; but I did not allow my feelings to relax my severity and she continued to sleep with her mother.

A week after our arrival at Sulzbach I left Madame d'Urfé with the Baron of Schaumburg and went to Colmar in the hope of good fortune. But I was disappointed, as the mother and daughter had both made arrangements for getting married.

A rich merchant, who had been in love with the mother eighteen years before, seeing her a widow and still pretty, felt his early flames revive, offered his hand and was accepted. A young advocate found Mimi to his taste and asked her in marriage. The mother and daughter, fearing the results of my affection and finding it would be a good match, lost no time in giving their consent. I was entertained in the family and supped in the midst of a numerous and choice assemblage; but, seeing that I should only annoy the ladies and weary myself waiting for some chance favour if I stayed, I bade them adieu and returned to Sulzbach the next morning. I found there a charming girl from Strasburg named Salzmann, three or four gamesters who had come to drink the waters and several ladies, to whom I shall introduce the reader in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER 92

ONE of the ladies, Mme. Saxe, was made by Nature to win the devotion of a man of feeling; if she had not had a jealous officer in her train who never let her go out of his sight and who seemed to threaten anyone who aspired to please, she would probably have had plenty of admirers. This officer was fond of piquet, but the lady was always obliged to sit close beside him, which she seemed to do with pleasure.

In the afternoon I played with him and continued doing so for five or six days. After that I could stand it no longer, as, when he had won ten or twelve louis, he invariably rose and left me to myself. His name was d'Entraques; he was a fine-looking man, though somewhat thin, and had a good share of wit and knowledge of the world.

We had not played together for two days when one afternoon he asked if I would like to take my revenge.

"No, I think not," said I, "for we don't play on the same principle. I play for amusement's sake and you play to win money."

"What do you mean? Your words are offensive."

"I didn't mean them to be offensive but, as a matter of fact, each time we have played you have risen after a quarter of an hour."

"You ought to be obliged to me, as otherwise you would have lost heavily."

"Possibly; but I don't think so."

"I can prove it to you."

"I accept the offer, but the first to leave the table must forfeit fifty louis."

"I agree; but money down."

"I never play on credit."

I ordered a waiter to bring cards and I went to fetch four or five rolls of a hundred louis each. We began playing for five louis the game, each player putting down the fifty louis of our wager.

We began to play at three and at nine o'clock d'Entragues said we might take some supper.

"I am not hungry," I replied, "but you can go if you want me to put the hundred louis in my pocket."

He laughed at this and went on playing, but his lady fair scowled at me, though I did not care in the least for that. All the guests went to supper and returned to keep us company till midnight, but at that hour we found ourselves alone. D'Entragues saw what kind of a man he had got hold of and said never a word, while I opened my lips only to score; we played with the utmost coolness.

At six o'clock in the morning the ladies and gentlemen who were there taking the waters began to assemble. We were applauded for our determination, in spite of our grim looks. The louis were on the table; I stood to lose a hundred and yet the game was going in my favour.

At nine the fair Madame Saxe put in an appearance and shortly after Madame d'Urfé came in with M. de Schaumburg. Both ladies advised us to take a cup of chocolate. D'Entragues was the first to consent and, thinking that I was almost done, he said, "Let us agree that the first man who asks for food, who absents himself for more than a quarter of an hour or who falls asleep in his chair loses the bet."

"I will take you at your word," I replied, "and I adhere to all your conditions."

The chocolate came, we took it and proceeded with our play. At noon we were summoned to dinner, but we both replied that we were not hungry. At four o'clock we allowed ourselves to be persuaded into taking some soup. When supper-time came and we were still playing, people began to think that the affair was getting serious and Madame Saxe urged us to divide the wager. D'Entragues, who had won a hundred louis, would have gladly consented, but I would not give in; and M. de Schaumburg pronounced me within my rights. My adversary might have abandoned the stake and still found himself with a balance to the good, but avarice, rather than pride, prevented his doing so. I felt the loss myself, but what I cared chiefly about was the point of honour. I still looked fresh, while he resembled a disinterred corpse. As Madame Saxe urged me strongly to give way, I answered that I felt deeply grieved at not being able to satisfy such a charming woman, but that there was a question of honour in the case, and I was determined not to yield to my antagonist if I sat there till I fell dead to the ground.

I had two objects in speaking thus: I wanted to frighten him and

to make him jealous of me. I felt certain that a man in a passion of jealousy would see double, and I hoped his play would suffer accordingly and that I should not have the mortification of losing a hundred louis to his superior play, even though I won the fifty louis of the wager.

The fair Madame Saxe gave me a glance of contempt and left us, but Madame d'Urfé, who believed I was infallible, avenged me by saying to d'Entragues, in a tone of the profoundest conviction, "My lord, sir! how I pity you."

The company did not return after supper and we were left alone to our play. We played on all the night and I observed my antagonist's face as closely as the cards. He began to lose his composure and made mistakes, his cards got mixed up and his scoring was wild. I was hardly less done up than he; I felt myself growing weaker and I hoped every moment to see him fall to the ground, as I was beginning to be afraid of being beaten in spite of the superior strength of my constitution. I had won back my money by daybreak and I cavilled with him for being away more than a quarter of an hour. This quarrel about nothing irritated him and roused me; the difference of our natures produced these different results and my stratagem succeeded because it was impromptu and could not have been foreseen. In the same way in war sudden stratagems succeed.

At nine o'clock Madame Saxe came in; her lover was losing.

"Now, sir," she said to me, "you may fairly yield."

"Madame," said I, "in the hope of pleasing you, I will gladly divide the stakes and rise from the table."

The tone of exaggerated gallantry with which I pronounced these words put d'Entragues into a rage and he answered sharply that he would not desist till one of us was dead.

With a glance at the lady which was meant to be lovelorn but which must have been extremely languid in my exhausted state, I said, "You see, madame, I am not the more obstinate of the two."

A dish of soup was served to us, but d'Entragues, who was in the last stage of exhaustion, had no sooner swallowed the soup than he fell from his chair in a dead faint. He was soon taken up and, after I had given six louis to the marker who had been watching for forty-eight hours, I pocketed the gold and went to the apothecary's, where I took a mild emetic. Afterwards I went to bed and slept for a few hours and at three o'clock I had an excellent dinner.

D'Entragues remained in his room till the next day. I expected a quarrel, but the night brings counsel and I was mistaken. As soon as he saw me, he ran up to me and embraced me, saying, "I made a silly bet, but you have given me a lesson which will last me all my days, and I am much obliged to you for it."

"I am delighted to hear it, provided your health has not suffered."

"No, I am quite well, but we will play no more together."

"Well, I hope we shan't play against each other any more."

In the course of eight or ten days I took Madame d'Urfé and the

pretended Lascaris to Bâle. We put up at the inn of the famous Imhoff, who swindled us, but all the same The Three Kings is the best inn in the town. I think I have noted that noon at Bâle is at eleven o'clock—an absurdity due to some historic event which I had explained to me but have forgotten. The inhabitants are said to be subject to a kind of madness, of which they are cured by taking the waters of Sulzbach, but they get it again as soon as they return.

We should have stayed at Bâle some time if it had not been for an incident which made me hasten our departure. It was as follows:

My necessities had obliged me to forgive the Corticelli to a certain extent and, when I came home early, I spent the night with her; but, when I came home late, as often happened, I slept in my own room. In the latter case the little hussy slept also alone in a room next to that of her mother, through whose chamber one had to pass to get to the daughter's.

One night I came in at one o'clock and, not feeling inclined to sleep, I took a candle and went in search of my charmer. I was rather surprised to find Signora Laura's door half open and, just as I was going in, the old woman came forward and took me by the arm, begging me not to go into her daughter's room.

"Why?" said I.

"She has been very poorly all the evening and is in need of sleep."

"Very good; then I will sleep, too."

So saying, I pushed the mother to one side and, entering the girl's room, I found her in bed with someone who was hiding under the sheets.

I gazed at the picture for a moment and then began to laugh and, sitting down on the bed, begged to inquire the name of the happy individual whom I should have the pleasure of throwing out of the window. On a chair I saw the gentleman's coat, trousers, hat and cane; but, as I had my two trusty pistols about me, I knew I had nothing to fear; however, I did not want to make a noise.

With tears in her eyes and trembling all over, the girl took my hand and begged me to forgive her.

"It's a young lord," said she, "and I don't even know his name."

"Oh, he is a young lord, is he? And you don't know his name, you little hussy, don't you? Well, he will tell me himself."

So saying, I took a pistol and vigorously stripped the sheets off the cuckoo who had got into my nest. I saw the face of a young man whom I did not know, his head covered with a nightcap but the rest perfectly naked, as indeed was my mistress. He turned his back to me to get his shirt, which he had thrown on the floor, but, seizing him by the arm, I held him firmly, with my pistol to his forehead.

"Kindly tell me your name, fair sir."

"I am Count B—, canon of Bâle."

"And do you think you have been performing an ecclesiastical function here?"

"No, sir, no, and I hope you will forgive me and the lady, too, for I am the only guilty party."

"I am not asking you whether she is guilty or not."

"Sir, the countess is perfectly innocent."

I was in a good humour and, far from being angry, was strongly inclined to laugh. I found the picture before me an attractive one; it was amusing and voluptuous. The sight was a truly unusual one and I remained contemplating it in silence for a quarter of an hour. The only thing which prevented my joining the party was the fear that I might find the canon to be a fool, incapable of playing his part with dignity. As the Corticelli passed quickly from tears to laughter, she would have played hers well, but, if the canon was a blockhead, I should have been degrading myself.

I felt certain that neither of them had guessed my thoughts, so I rose and told the canon to put on his clothes.

"No one must hear anything more of this," said I, "but you and I will go to a distance of two hundred paces and burn a little powder."

"No, no, sir," cried my gentleman. "You may take me where you like and kill me if you please, but I was not meant for a fighting man."

"Really?"

"Yes, sir, and I became a priest only to escape the fatal duty of duelling."

"Then you are a coward and will not object to a good thrashing?"

"Anything you like, but it would be cruelty, for my love blinded me. I came here only a quarter of an hour ago and the countess and her governess were both asleep."

"You are a liar."

"I had only just taken off my shirt when you came and I never saw this angel before."

"And that's gospel truth," said the Corticelli.

"Are you aware that you are a couple of impudent scoundrels? And as for you, master canon, you deserve to be roasted, like St. Laurence."

In the meanwhile the wretched ecclesiastic had huddled on his clothes.

"Follow me, sir," said I, in a tone which froze the marrow of his bones; and I took him to my room.

"What will you do," said I, "if I forgive you and let you go without putting you to shame?"

"I will leave town within an hour at the outside and you shall never see me here again; and if ever we meet in future, you will find me always ready to do you a good service."

"Very good. Begone and hereafter take more precautions in your amorous adventures."

After this I went to bed, well pleased with what I had seen and what I had done, for I now had complete power over the Corticelli.

In the morning I called on her as soon as I got up, and told her to pack up her things, forbidding her to leave her room till she got into the carriage.

"I shall say I am ill."

"Just as you please, but nobody will take any notice of you."

I did not wait for her to make any further objections, but proceeded to tell the tale of what had passed to Madame d'Urfé, slightly embroidering the narrative. She laughed heartily and inquired of the oracle what must be done with the Lascaris after her evident pollution by the Evil Genius, disguised as a priest. The oracle replied that we must set out the next day for Besançon, whence Madame d'Urfé would go to Lyons and await me there, while I would take the countess to Geneva and thence send her back to her native country.

The worthy visionary was enchanted with this arrangement and saw in it another proof of the benevolence of Selenis, who would thus give her an opportunity of seeing young d'Aranda once more. It was agreed that I was to rejoin her in the spring of the following year, to perform the great operation which was to make her be reborn a man. She had not the slightest doubt as to the reasonableness of this performance.

All was ready and the next day we started, Madame d'Urfé and I in the travelling carriage and the Corticelli, her mother and the servants in another conveyance.

When we got to Besançon, Madame d'Urfé left me and the next day I journeyed towards Geneva with the mother and daughter.

On the way I not only did not speak to my companions, I did not so much as look at them. I made them take their meals with a servant from the Franche-Comté, whom I had taken on M. de Schaumburg's recommendation.

I went to my banker and asked him to get me a good coachman who would take two ladies of my acquaintance to Turin.

When I got back to the inn, I wrote to the Chevalier Raiberti, sending him a bill of exchange. I warned him that within three or four days after the receipt of my letter he would be accosted by a Bolognese dancer and her mother, bearing a letter of recommendation. I begged him to see that they lodged in a respectable house and to pay for them on my behalf. I also said that I should be much obliged if he would contrive that she should dance, even for nothing, at the carnival, and I begged him to warn her that, if I heard any tales about her when I came to Turin, our relations would be at an end.

The following day a clerk of M. Tronchin's brought a coachman for me to see. The man said he was ready to start as soon as he had had his dinner. I confirmed the agreement he had made with the banker, summoned the two Corticellis and said to the coachman:

"These are the persons you are to drive and they will pay you when they reach Turin in safety with their luggage. You are to take four days and a half for the journey, as is stipulated in the agreement, of which they have one copy and you another."

An hour after, he called to put the luggage in. The Corticelli burst into tears, but I was not so cruel as to send her away without any consolation. Her bad conduct had been severely enough punished already. I made her dine with me and, as I gave her the letter for M. Raiberti and twenty-five louis for the journey, I told her what I

had written to the gentleman, who would take good care of them. She asked me for a trunk containing three dresses and a superb mantle which Madame d'Urfé had given her before she became mad, but I said we would talk of that at Turin. She dared not mention the casket but continued weeping; however, she did not move me to pity. I left her much better off than when I first met her; she had good clothes, good linen, jewels and an exceedingly pretty watch I had given her—altogether a good deal more than she deserved.

As she was going, I escorted her to the carriage, less for politeness' sake than to commend her once more to the coachman. When she was fairly gone, I felt as if a load had been taken off my back and I went to look up my worthy syndic, whom the reader will not have forgotten. I had not written to him since I was in Florence, and I anticipated the pleasure of seeing his surprise, which was extreme. But, after gazing at me for a moment, he threw his arms round my neck, kissed me several times and said he had not expected the pleasure of seeing me.

"How are our sweethearts getting on?"

"Excellently. They are always talking about you and regretting your absence; they will go wild with joy when they know you are here."

"You must tell them directly, then."

"I will go and warn them that we shall all sup together this evening. By the way, M. de Voltaire has given up his house at Délices to M. de Villars and has gone to live at Ferney."

"That makes no difference to me, as I was not thinking of calling on him this time. I shall be here for two or three weeks and I mean to devote my time to you."

"You are too good."

"Will you give me writing materials before you go out? I will write a few letters while you are away."

He put me in possession of his desk and I wrote to my late housekeeper, Madame Lebel, telling her I was going to spend three weeks at Geneva and that, if I were sure of seeing her, I would gladly pay a visit to Lausanne. Unfortunately, I also wrote to the bad Genoese poet, Ascanio Pogomas, or Giacomo Passano, whom I had met at Leghorn. I told him to go to Turin and wait for me there. At the same time I wrote M. F.—, commending the poet and asking him to give him twelve louis for the journey.

My evil genius made me think of this man, who was an impressive-looking fellow and had all the air of a magician, and introduce him to Madame d'Urfé as a great adept. You will see, dear reader, in the course of a year whether I had reason to repent of this fatal inspiration.

As the syndic and I were on our way to our young friends' house, I saw an elegant English carriage for sale and I exchanged it for mine, giving the owner a hundred louis as well. While the bargain was going on, the uncle of the young theologian who argued so well and to whom I had given such pleasant lessons in physiology came up to me, embraced me and asked me to dine with him the next day.

Before we got to the house, the syndic informed me that we should find another extremely pretty but uninitiated girl present.

"All the better," said I, "I shall know how to regulate my conduct and perhaps I may succeed in initiating her."

In my pocket I had placed a casket containing a dozen exquisite rings. I had long been aware that such trifling presents are often very serviceable.

The moment of meeting those charming girls once more was one of the happiest I have ever enjoyed. In their greeting I read delight and love of pleasure. Their love was without envy or jealousy or any ideas which would have injured their self-esteem. They felt worthy of my regard, as they had lavished their favours on me without any degrading feelings and impelled by the same emotion that had moved me.

The presence of the neophyte obliged us to greet each other with what is called decency, and she allowed me to kiss her without raising her eyes, but blushing violently.

After the usual commonplaces had passed and we had indulged in some double meanings which made us laugh and made her look thoughtful, I told her she was pretty as a little Cupid and that I felt sure her mind, as beautiful as its casket, could harbour no prejudices.

"I have all the prejudices which honour and religion suggest," she modestly replied.

I saw that this was a case requiring very delicate treatment. There was no question of carrying the citadel by sudden assault. But, as usual, I fell in love with her.

The syndic having pronounced my name, she said:

"Ah! then, you, sir, are the person who discussed some very singular questions with my cousin, the pastor's niece. I am delighted to make your acquaintance."

"I am equally pleased to make yours, but I hope the pastor's niece said nothing against me."

"Not at all; she has a very high opinion of you."

"I am going to dine with her to-morrow, and I shall take care to thank her."

"To-morrow! I should like to be there, for I enjoy philosophical discussions, though I never dare to put a word in."

The syndic praised her discretion and wisdom in such a manner that I was convinced he was in love with her and either had seduced her or was trying to do so. Her name was Helen. I asked the young ladies if Helen was their sister. The eldest replied, with a sly smile, that she was a sister but as yet had no brother, and with this explanation she ran up to Helen and kissed her. Then the syndic and I vied with each other in paying her compliments, telling her that we hoped to be her brothers. She blushed but gave no answer to our gallantries. I then drew forth my casket and, seeing that all the girls were enchanted with the rings, I told them to choose which ones they liked best. The charming Helen imitated their example and repaid me with a modest kiss. Soon after she left us and we were once more free, as in old times.

The syndic had good cause to show for his love of Helen. She was not merely pleasing, she was made to inspire a violent passion. However, the three friends had no hope of making her join in their pleasures, for they said that she had invincible feelings of modesty where men were concerned.

We supped merrily and after supper began our sports again, the syndic remaining, as usual, a mere looker-on and well pleased with his part. At midnight we broke up and the worthy syndic escorted me to the door of my lodging.

The day following I went to the pastor's and found a numerous party assembled, amongst others M. d'Harcourt and M. de Ximénès, who told me that M. de Voltaire knew that I was at Geneva and hoped to see me. I replied with a profound bow. Mlle. Hedvig, the pastor's niece, complimented me, but I was still better pleased to see her cousin Helen. The theologian of twenty-two was fair and pleasant to the eyes, but she had not that *je ne sais quoi*, that shade of bitter-sweet, which adds zest to hope as well as pleasure. However, the evident friendship between Hedvig and Helen gave me good hopes of success with the latter.

We had an excellent dinner and, while it lasted, the conversation was restricted to ordinary topics; but at dessert the pastor begged M. de Ximénès to ask his niece some questions. Knowing his world-wide reputation, I expected him to put her some problem in geometry, but he only asked whether a lie could be justified on the principle of a mental reservation.

Hedvig replied that there are cases in which a lie is necessary, but that the principle of a mental reservation is always a cheat.

"Then how could Christ have said that the time in which the world was to come to an end was unknown to Him?"

"He was speaking the truth; it was not known to Him."

"Then he was not God?"

"That is a false deduction, for, since God may do all things, He may certainly be ignorant of an event in futurity."

I thought the way in which she brought in the word "futurity" almost sublime. Hedvig was loudly applauded and her uncle went all round the table to kiss her. I had a very natural objection on the tip of my tongue, which she might have found difficult to answer, but I wanted to get into her good graces and so I kept my own counsel.

M. d'Harcourt was urged to ask her some questions, but he replied in the words of Horace, "*Nulla mihi religio est.*" Then Hedvig turned to me and asked me to put her some hard question, "something difficult, which you don't know yourself."

"I shall be delighted. Do you grant that a god possesses in a supreme degree the qualities of man?"

"Yes, excepting man's weaknesses."

"Do you class the generative power as a weakness?"

"No."

"Will you tell me, then, of what nature would have been the offspring of a union between a god and a mortal woman?"

Hedvig blushed as red as fire.

The pastor and the other guests looked at each other, while I gazed fixedly at the young theologian, who was reflecting. M. d'Harcourt said that we should have to send for Voltaire to settle a question so difficult but, as Hedvig had collected her thoughts and seemed ready to speak, everybody was silent.

"It would be absurd," said she, "to suppose that a deity could perform such an action without its having any results. At the end of nine months the woman would be delivered of a male child, which would be three parts man and one part god."

At these words all the guests applauded and M. de Ximénès expressed his admiration of the way the question had been solved, adding, "Naturally, if the son of the woman married, his children would be seven-eighths men and one-eighth gods."

"Yes," said I, "unless he married a goddess, which would make the proportion different."

"Tell me exactly," said Hedvig, "what proportion of divinity there would be in a child of the sixteenth generation."

"Give me a pencil and I will soon tell you," said M. de Ximénès.

"There is no need to calculate it," said I. "The child would have a small fraction of the wit which you enjoy."

Everybody applauded this gallant speech, which did not by any means offend the lady to whom it was addressed.

This pretty blonde was chiefly desirable for the charms of her intellect. We rose from the table and made a circle round her, but she told us with much grace not to pay her any more compliments. I took Helen aside and told her to get her cousin to choose a ring from the casket, which I gave her, and she seemed glad to execute the commission. A quarter of an hour afterwards Hedvig came to show me her hand adorned with the ring she had chosen. I kissed it rapturously and she must have guessed from the warmth of my kisses what feelings she had inspired in me.

In the evening Helen told the syndic and the three girls all about the morning's discussion without leaving out the smallest detail. She told the story with ease and grace and I had no occasion to prompt her. We begged her to stay to supper, but she whispered something to the three friends and they agreed that it was impossible; but she said that she might spend a couple of days with them in their country house on the lake if they would ask her mother.

At the syndic's request the girls called on the mother the next day, and the day after that they went off with Helen. The same evening we went and supped with them, but we could not sleep there. The syndic was to take me to a house a short distance off, where we should be very comfortable. This being the case, there was no hurry and the eldest girl said that the syndic and I could leave whenever we liked, but that they were going to bed. So saying, she took Helen to her room, while the two

others slept in another room. Soon after the syndic went into the room where Helen was and I visited the two others.

I had scarcely been with my two sweethearts an hour when the syndic interrupted my erotic exploits by begging me to go.

"What did you do with Helen?" I asked.

"Nothing; she's a simpleton and an intractable one. She hid under the sheets and would not look at her friend."

"You ought to have addressed your attentions to her instead."

"I did so, but she repulsed me again and again. I gave it up and shall not try it again unless you will tame her for me."

"How is that to be done?"

"Go there to dinner to-morrow. I shall be away in Geneva. I shall be back by supper-time and maybe we can get her tipsy."

"That would be a pity. Let me see what I can do."

I accordingly went to dine with them by myself the next day and they entertained me in all the meaning of that word. After dinner we went for a walk and the three friends, understanding my aims, left me alone with the intractable girl, who resisted my caresses in a manner which almost made me give up the hope of taming her.

"The syndic," said I, "is in love with you and last night . . ."

"Last night," she said, "he amused himself with his old friend. I am for everyone following his own tastes, but I expect to be allowed to follow mine."

"If I could gain your heart, I should be happy."

"Why don't you invite the pastor and my cousin to dine with you? I could come, too, for the pastor makes much of everyone who loves his niece."

"I am glad to hear that. Has she a lover?"

"No."

"I can scarcely believe it. She is young, pretty, agreeable and very clever."

"You don't understand Genevan ways. It is because she is so clever that no young man falls in love with her. Those who might be attracted by her personal charms hold themselves aloof on account of her intellectual capacities, as they would have to sit in silence before her."

"Are the young Genevans so ignorant, then?"

"As a rule. Some of them have received excellent educations, but in a general way they are full of narrow ideas. Nobody wishes to be considered a fool or a blockhead, but clever women are not appreciated; and, if a girl is witty or well educated, she endeavours to hide her lights, at least if she desires to be married."

"Ah! now I see why you did not open your lips during our discussion."

"No, I know I have nothing to hide. That was not the motive which made me keep silence, but the pleasure of listening. I admire my cousin, who was not afraid to display her learning on a subject which any other girl would have affected to know nothing about."

"Yes, 'affected,' though she might very probably know as much as her grandmother."

"That's a matter of morals, or rather of prejudices."

"Your reasoning is admirable and I am already longing for the party you so cleverly suggested."

"You will have the pleasure of being with my cousin."

"To do her justice, Hedvig is certainly a very interesting and agreeable girl; but believe me, it is your presence that will constitute my chief enjoyment."

"And what if I don't believe you?"

"You would wrong me and pain me, for I love you dearly."

"In spite of that, you have tried to deceive me. I am sure that you have given marks of your affection to those three young ladies. For my part, I pity them."

"Why?"

"Because neither of them can flatter herself that you love her, and her alone."

"And do you think that your delicacy of feeling makes you happier than they?"

"Yes, I think so, though of course I have no experience in the matter. Tell me truly, do you think I am right?"

"Yes, I do."

"I am delighted to hear it; but you must confess that to associate me with them in your attentions would not be giving me the greatest possible proof of your love."

"Yes, I do confess it and I beg your pardon. But tell me how I should go about it to ask the pastor to dinner."

"There will be no difficulty. Just call on him and ask him to come and, if you wish me to be of the party, beg him to ask my mother and myself."

"Why your mother?"

"Because he has been in love with her these twenty years and loves her still."

"And where shall I give this dinner?"

"Is not M. Tronchin your banker?"

"Yes."

"He has a nice pleasure house on the lake; ask him to lend it you for the day; he will be delighted to do so. But don't tell the syndic or his three friends anything about it; they can hear of it afterwards."

"But do you think your learned cousin will be glad to be in my company?"

"More than glad, you may be sure."

"Very good; everything will be arranged by to-morrow. The day after you will return to Geneva and the party will be set for two or three days later."

The syndic came back in due course and we had a very pleasant evening. After supper we went to bed as before. I knew it would be of no use to try to do anything with Helen, so I contented myself with

a few kisses, after which I wished them good night and passed on to the next room. I found the girls in a deep sleep and the syndic seemed visibly bored. He did not look more cheerful when I told him I had had no success with Helen.

"I see," said he, "that I shall waste my time with the little fool. I think I will give her up."

"I think that's the best thing you could do," I replied, "for a man who languishes after a woman who is either devoid of feeling or full of caprice makes himself her dupe. Bliss should be neither too easy nor too hard to win."

The next day we returned to Geneva and M. Tronchin seemed delighted to oblige me. The pastor accepted my invitation and said I was sure to be charmed with Helen's mother. It was easy to see that the worthy man cherished a tenderness for her and, if she responded at all, it would be all the better for my purposes.

I was thinking of supping with the charming Helen and her three friends at the house on the lake, but an express message summoned me to Lausanne. Madame Lebel, my old housekeeper, invited me to sup with her and her husband. She wrote that she had made her husband promise to take her to Lausanne as soon as she got my letter, and she added that she was sure I would resign everything to give her the pleasure of seeing me. She indicated the hour at which she would be at her mother's house.

Madame Lebel was one of the ten or twelve women for whom in my happy youth I cherished the greatest affection. She had all the qualities to make a man a good wife if it had been my fate to experience such felicity. But perhaps I did well not to tie myself down with irrevocable bonds, though now my independence is another name for slavery. But, if I had married a woman of tact, who had ruled me unawares to myself, I should have taken care of my fortune and have had children, instead of being lonely and penniless, as I am now.

But I must indulge no longer in digressions on the past, which cannot be recalled, and, since my recollections make me happy, I should be foolish to cherish idle regrets.

I calculated that, if I started directly, I should get to Lausanne an hour before Madame Lebel and I did not hesitate to give her this proof of my regard. I must here warn my readers, that, though I loved this woman well, I was then occupied with another passion and no voluptuous thought mingled with my desire of seeing her. My esteem for her was enough to hold my passions in check, but I esteemed Lebel, too, and nothing would have induced me to disturb the happiness of this married pair.

I wrote in haste to the syndic, telling him that an important and sudden call obliged me to start for Lausanne, but that I should have the pleasure of supping with him and his three friends in Geneva on the following day.

I knocked at Madame Dubois's door at five o'clock, almost dying with hunger. Her surprise was extreme, for she did not know that her

daughter was going to meet me at her house. Without more ado, I gave her two louis to get us a good supper.

At seven o'clock, Madame Lebel, her husband and a child of eighteen months, whom I easily recognised as my own, arrived. Our meeting was a happy one, indeed; we spent ten hours at table and mirth and joy prevailed. At daybreak she started for Soleure, where Lebel had business. M. de Chavigny had desired to be remembered most affectionately to me. Lebel assured me that the ambassador was extremely kind to his wife, and he thanked me heartily for my generosity in giving her up to him. I could see for myself that he was a happy husband and that his wife was as happy as he.

My dear housekeeper talked to me about my son. She said that nobody suspected the truth but that neither she nor Lebel (who had faithfully kept his promise and had not consummated the marriage for the two months agreed upon) had any doubts.

"The secret," said Lebel to me, "will never be known and your son will be my sole heir or will share my property with my children if I ever have any, which I doubt."

"My dear," said his wife, "there is somebody who has very strong suspicions on the subject and these suspicions will gain strength as the child grows older, but we have nothing to fear on that score, as she is well paid to keep the secret."

"And who is this person?" said I.

"Madame X—. She has forgotten the past and often speaks of you."

"Will you kindly remember me to her?"

"I shall be delighted to do so and I am sure the message will give her great pleasure."

Lebel showed me my ring and I showed him his and gave him a superb watch for my son.

"You must give it to him," I said, "when you think he is old enough."

We shall hear of the young gentleman in twenty-one years at Fontainebleau.

I passed three hours in telling them of all the adventures I had had during the twenty-seven months since we had seen one another. As to their history, it was soon told; it had all the calm which belongs to happiness.

Madame Lebel was as pretty as ever and I could see no change in her, but I was no longer the same man. She thought me less lively than of old and she was right. La Renaud had blasted me and the pretended Lascaris had given me a great deal of trouble and anxiety.

We embraced each other tenderly and the wedded pair returned to Soleure and I to Geneva; but, feeling that I wanted rest, I wrote to the syndic that I was not well and could not come till the next day and, after I had done so, I went to bed.

The next day, the eve of my dinner party, I ordered a repast in which no expense was to be spared. I did not forget to tell the landlord to get me the best wines, the choicest liqueurs, ices and all the materials for a bowl of punch. I told him that we should be six in number, for I fore-

saw that M. Tronchin would dine with us. I was right; I found him at his pretty house ready to receive us and I had not much trouble in inducing him to stay. In the evening I thought it was well to tell the syndic and his three friends about it in Helen's presence, while she, feigning ignorance, said that her mother had told her they were going somewhere or other to dinner.

"I am delighted to hear it," said I. "It must be at M. Tronchin's."

My dinner would have satisfied the most exacting *gourmet*, but Hedvig was its real charm. She treated difficult theological questions with so much grace and rationalised so skilfully, that, though one might not be convinced, it was impossible to help being attracted. I have never seen any theologian who could treat the most difficult points with so much facility, eloquence and real dignity, and at dinner she completed her conquest of my heart. M. Tronchin, who had never heard her speak before, thanked me a hundred times for having procured him this pleasure and, being obliged to leave us on a matter of business, he asked us to meet again in two days' time.

I was much interested during the dessert by the evident tenderness of the pastor for Helen's mother. His amorous eloquence grew in strength as he irrigated his throat with champagne, Greek wine and eastern liqueurs. The lady seemed pleased and was a match for him as far as drinking was concerned, while the two girls and myself drank with sobriety. However, the mixture of wines and, above all, the punch had done their work and my charmers were exceedingly elated. Their spirits were delightful but rather pronounced. I seized this favourable opportunity to ask the permission of the elderly pair to take the young ladies for a walk in the garden by the lake and they told us enthusiastically to go and enjoy ourselves. We went out arm in arm and in a few minutes we were out of sight of everyone.

"Do you know," said I to Hedvig, "that you have made a conquest of M. Tronchin?"

"Have I? The worthy banker asked me some very silly questions."

"You must not expect everyone to be able to contend with you."

"I can't help telling you that your question pleased me best of all. A bigoted theologian at the end of the table seemed scandalised at the question and still more at the answer."

"And why?"

"He says I ought to have told you that a deity could not impregnate a mortal woman. He said he could explain the reason to me if I were a man but, being a woman and a maid, he could not with propriety expound such mysteries. I wish you would tell me what the fool meant."

"I should be very glad, but you must allow me to speak plainly and I shall have to take it for granted that you are acquainted with the physical conformation of a man."

"Yes, speak as plainly as you like, for there is nobody to hear what we say; but I must confess that I am acquainted with the peculiarities of the male only by theory and reading. I have no practical knowledge.

I have seen statues, but I have never seen or examined a real live man. Have you, Helen?"

"I have never wished to do so."

"Why not? It is good to know everything."

As this philosophical discourse, conducted by the young theologian in quite a professional manner, proceeded, we reached a beautiful basin of water, with a flight of marble steps for bathers. Although the air was cool, our heads were hot and I conceived the idea of telling them it would do them good to bathe their feet and that, if they would allow me, I would take off their shoes and stockings.

"I should like to so much," said Hedvig.

"And I, too," said Helen.

"Then sit down, ladies, on the first step."

They proceeded to sit down and I began to take off their shoes, praising the beauty of their legs and pretending for the time being not to want to go farther than the knee. When they got into the water, they were obliged to hold up their clothes and I encouraged them to do so.

"Well," said Hedvig, "men have thighs, too."

Helen, who would have been ashamed to be beaten by her cousin, was not backward in showing her legs.

"That will do, charming maids," said I. "You might catch cold if you stayed longer in the water."

They walked out backwards, still holding up their clothes for fear of wetting them, and it was then my duty to wipe them dry with all the handkerchiefs I had. This pleasant task gave my hands and eyes a rare opportunity and the reader will imagine that I made the most of it. The fair theologian told me I wanted to know too much, but Helen let me do what I liked, with such a tender and affectionate expression that it was as much as I could do to keep within bounds. At last, when I had drawn on their shoes and stockings, I told them I was delighted to have seen the two prettiest girls in Geneva.

"What effect had it on you?" asked Hedvig.

"I daren't tell you."

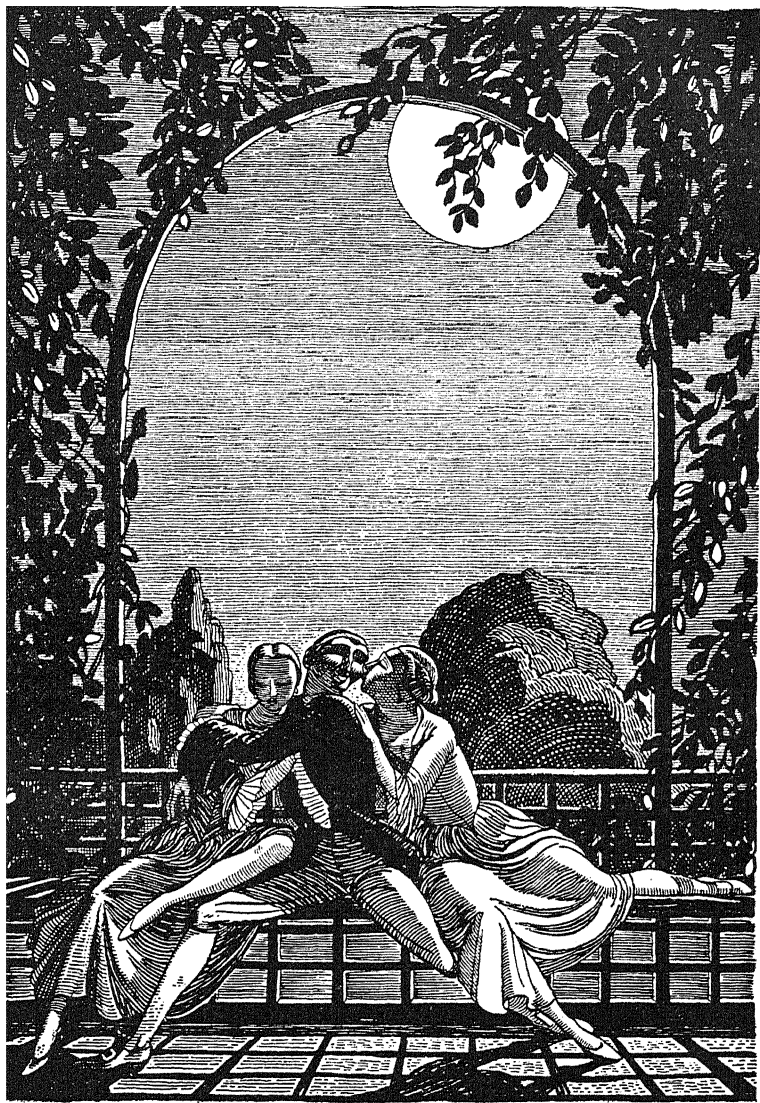
"Why don't you bathe, too?"

"It's out of the question; a man's undressing takes so much trouble."

"But we still have before us two hours in which we need not fear interruption."

This reply gave me a foretaste of the bliss I might expect, but I did not wish to expose myself to an illness by going into the water in the state I was in. Noticing a summer-house at a little distance and feeling sure that M. Tronchin had left the door open, I took the girls by the arm and led them there without giving them any hint of my intention. The summer-house was scented with vases of *pot pourri* and adorned with engravings; but, best of all, there was a large couch which seemed made for repose and pleasure. I sat down on it between my two sweet-hearts and caressed them.

After an hour devoted to intimate and delicious pastimes, we made ourselves presentable once more and spent half an hour in kisses and



Although the air was cool, our heads were hot, and I conceived the idea of telling them that it would do them good to bathe their feet, and that if they would allow me I would take off their shoes and stockings.

"Hedvig, my dear Hedvig, you are right after all. Here it is. The prohibition was given before woman was made."

Everybody applauded, but Hedvig remained quite calm; it was only the two scholars and Madame Tronchin who still seemed disturbed. Another lady then asked her if it was allowable to believe the history of the apple to be symbolical. She replied, "I do not think so, because it could only be a symbol of sexual union and it is clear that such did not take place between Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden."

"The learned differ on this point."

"All the worse for them, madame; the Scripture is plain enough. In the first verse of the fourth chapter it is written that Adam knew his wife after they had been driven from the Garden, and that in consequence she conceived Cain."

"Yes, but the verse does not say that Adam did not know her before, and consequently he might have done so."

"I cannot admit the inference, as in that case she would have conceived; for it would be absurd to suppose that two creatures who had just left God's hands and were consequently as nearly perfect as is possible, could perform the act of generation without its having any result."

This reply gained everyone's applause and compliments to Hedvig made the round of the table.

M. Tronchin asked her if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul could be gathered from the Old Testament alone.

"The Old Testament," she replied, "does not teach this doctrine; but nevertheless human reason teaches it, as the soul is a substance and the destruction of any substance is an unthinkable proposition."

"Then I will ask you," said the banker, "if the existence of the soul is established in the Bible."

"Where there is smoke there is always fire."

"Tell me, then, if matter can think."

"I cannot answer that question, for it is beyond my knowledge. I can only say that, as I believe God to be all-powerful, I cannot deny Him the power to make matter capable of thought."

"But what is your own opinion?"

"I believe that I have a soul endowed with thinking capacities, but I do not know whether I shall remember after death that I had the honour of dining with you to-day."

"Then you think that the soul and the memory may be separable; but in that case you would not be a theologian."

"One may be a theologian and a philosopher, for philosophy never contradicts any truth, and besides, to say 'I do not know' is not the same as to say 'I am sure'."

Three-fourths of the guests burst into cries of admiration and the fair philosopher enjoyed seeing me laugh with pleasure at the applause. The pastor wept for joy and whispered something to Helen's mother. All at once he turned to me, saying, "Ask my niece some questions."

"Yes," said Hedvig, "but it must be something quite new."

"That is a hard task," I replied, "for how am I to know that what I ask is new to you? However, tell me if one must dwell on the first principle of a thing one wants to understand."

"Certainly, and that is why God, having no first principle, is incomprehensible."

"God be praised! That is how I wanted you to answer. Now tell me if God can be conscious of His own existence."

"There my learning is baffled. I know not what to reply. You should not ask me so hard a thing as that."

"But you wished for something new. I thought the newest thing would be to see you at a loss."

"That's prettily said. Be kind enough to reply for me, gentlemen, and teach me what to say."

Everybody tried to answer, but nothing was said worthy of record. Hedvig at last said, "My opinion is that, since God knows all, He knows of His own existence, but you must not ask me how He knows it."

"That's well said," I answered, and nobody could throw any further light on the matter.

All the company looked on me as a polite atheist, so superficial is the judgment of society, but it did not matter to me whether they thought me an atheist or not.

M. de Ximénès asked Hedvig if matter was created.

"I cannot recognise the word 'created'," she replied. "Ask me whether matter was formed and I shall reply in the affirmative. The word 'created' cannot have existed, for the existence of anything must be prior to the word which explains it."

"Then what meaning do you assign to the word 'created'?"

"Made out of nothing. You see the absurdity, for nothing must have first existed. I am glad to see you laugh. Do you think that nothingness could be created?"

"You are right."

"Not at all, not at all," said one of the guests, superciliously. Everybody laughed, as he knew not what to add.

"Kindly tell me who was your teacher?" M. de Ximénès asked of Hedvig.

"My uncle there."

"Not at all, my dear niece. I certainly never taught you what you have been telling us to-day. But my niece, gentlemen, reads and reflects over what she has read, perhaps with rather too much freedom, but I love her all the same because she always ends by acknowledging that she knows nothing."

A lady who had not opened her lips until then asked Hedvig for a definition of "spirit."

"Your question is a purely philosophical one and I must answer that I do not know enough of spirit or matter to be able to give a satisfactory definition."

"But, since you acknowledge the existence of Deity and must there-

fore have an abstract idea of spirit, you must have some notions on the subject and should be able to tell me how it acts on matter."

"No solid foundation can be built on abstract ideas. Hobbes calls such ideas mere fantasms. One may have them but, if one begins to reason on them, one is landed in contradiction. I know that God sees me, but I should labour in vain if I endeavoured to prove it by reasoning, for reason tells us no one can see anything without organs of sight; and, God being a pure spirit and therefore without organs, it is scientifically impossible that He can see us any more than we can see Him. But Moses and several others have seen Him and I believe it so, without attempting to reason on it."

"You are quite right," said I, "for you would be confronted by blank impossibility. But, if you take to reading Hobbes, you are in danger of becoming an atheist."

"I am not afraid of that. I cannot conceive the possibility of atheism."

After dinner everybody crowded round this truly astonishing girl, so that I had no opportunity of whispering my love. However, I went aside with Helen, who told me that the pastor and his niece were going to sup with her mother the following day.

"Hedvig," she added, "will stay the night and sleep with me, as she always does when she comes to supper with her uncle. It remains to be seen if you are willing to hide in a place I will show you at eleven o'clock to-morrow, in order to sleep with us. Call on my mother at that hour to-morrow and I will find an opportunity of showing you where it is. You will be safe though not comfortable and, if you grow weary, you can console yourself by thinking that you are in our minds."

"Shall I have to stay there long?"

"Four hours at the most. At seven o'clock the street door is shut and is opened after that only to those who ring."

"If I happen to cough while I am in hiding, might I be heard?"

"Yes, that might happen."

"That's a great hazard. All the rest is of no consequence; but no matter, I will risk all for the sake of so great happiness."

In the morning I paid the mother a visit and, as Helen was escorting me out, she showed me a door between the two stairs.

"At seven o'clock," said she, "this door will be open and, when you are in, put on the bolt. Take care that no one sees you as you are entering the house."

At a quarter to seven I was already a prisoner. I found a seat in my cell, otherwise I should have been able neither to lie down nor to stand up. It was a regular hole and I knew by my sense of smell that hams and cheeses were usually kept there; but it contained none at present, for I felt all round to see how the land lay. As I was cautiously stepping round, I felt my foot encounter some resistance and, putting down my hand, I recognised the feel of linen. It was a napkin containing two plates, a nice roast fowl, bread and a second napkin. Searching again, I came across a bottle and a glass. I was grateful to my charmers

for having thought of my stomach, but, as I had purposely made a late and heavy meal, I determined to defer the consumption of my cold collation till a later hour.

At nine o'clock I began and, as I had neither a knife nor a corkscrew, I was obliged to break the neck of the bottle with a brick which I was fortunately able to detach from the mouldering floor. The wine was delicious old Neufchâtel and the fowl was stuffed with truffles, and I felt convinced that my two nymphs must have some rudimentary ideas on the subject of stimulants. I should have passed the time pleasantly enough if it had not been for the occasional visits of a rat, who nearly made me sick with his disgusting odour. I remembered that I had been annoyed in the same way at Cologne under somewhat similar circumstances.

At last ten o'clock struck and I heard the pastor's voice as he came downstairs talking; he warned the girls not to play any tricks together and to go to sleep quietly. That brought back to my memory M. Rose leaving Madame Orio's house in Venice twenty-two years before and, reflecting on my character, I found myself much changed, though not more reasonable; but, if I was not so responsive to the charms of the fair sex, the two beauties who were awaiting me were much superior to Madame Orio's nieces.

In my long and profligate career, in which I have turned the heads of some hundreds of ladies, I have become familiar with all the methods of seduction, but my guiding principle has been never to direct my attack against novices or those whose prejudices were likely to prove an obstacle except in the presence of another woman. I soon found out that timidity makes a girl averse to being seduced, while in company with another girl she is easily conquered; the weakness of the one brings on the fall of the other. Fathers and mothers are of the contrary opinion, but they are in the wrong. They will not trust their daughter to take a walk or to go to a ball with a young man, but, if she has another girl with her, there is no objection. I repeat, they are mistaken; if the young man has the requisite skill, their daughter is a lost woman. A feeling of false shame hinders both from making an absolute and determined resistance and, the first step once taken, the rest comes inevitably and quickly. The girl grants some small favour and immediately makes her friend grant a much greater one, to hide her own blushes; and, if the seducer is clever at his trade, the young innocent will soon have gone too far to be able to draw back. Besides, the more innocence a girl has, the less she knows of the methods of seduction. Before she has had time to think, pleasure attracts her, curiosity draws her a little farther and opportunity does the rest.

For example, I might possibly have been able to seduce Hedvig without Helen, but I am certain I should never have succeeded with Helen if she had not seen her cousin take liberties with me which she no doubt thought contrary to the feelings of modesty which a respectable young woman ought to have.

Though I do not repent of my amorous exploits, I am far from wish-

ing that my example should serve for the perversion of the fair sex, who have so many claims on my homage. I desire that what I say may be a warning to fathers and mothers and secure me a place in their esteem at any rate.

Soon after the pastor had gone, I heard three light knocks on my prison door. I opened it and my hand was folded in a palm as soft as satin. All my being was moved. It was Helen's hand and that happy moment had already repaid me for my long waiting.

"Follow me on tiptoe," she whispered as soon as she had shut the door; but in my impatience I clasped her in my arms and showed her the effect which her mere presence had produced on me, while at the same time I assured myself of her docility. "There," she said, "now come upstairs softly after me."

I followed her as best I could in the darkness, and she took me along a gallery into a dark room and then into a lighter one, which contained Hedvig in a state of considerable undress. She came to me with open arms as soon as she saw me and, embracing me ardently, expressed her gratitude for my long and dreary imprisonment.

"Divine Hedvig," I answered, "if I had not loved you madly, I would not have stayed a quarter of an hour in that dismal cell, but I am ready for your sake to spend four hours there every day till I leave Geneva. But we must not lose any time; let us to bed."

"You two go to bed," said Helen. "I will sleep on the sofa."

"No, no," cried Hedvig, "don't think of it! Our fates must be exactly equal."

"Yes, darling Helen," said I, embracing her, "I love you both with equal ardour and these ceremonies are only wasting the time in which I ought to be assuring you of my affection. If all is safe, I will remain with you till you send me away, but, whatever you do, do not put out the light."

Hedvig blushed and parted with the last shred of her modesty, citing the opinion of St. Clement Alexandrinus that the seat of shame is in the shirt. I praised her, in the hope of encouraging Helen, who was slowly undressing; but an accusation of mock modesty from her cousin had more effect than all my praises. Her embarrassment, this strife between departing modesty and rising passion, enchanted me.

I told them that I wished to be with them every night till I left Geneva, but they told me sadly that this was impossible.

"In five or six days' time, perhaps, the opportunity may occur again, but that will be all. Ask us to sup at your inn to-morrow," said Hedvig, "and maybe chance will favour the commission of a sweet felony."

At daybreak we had to part. I left them in bed and was fortunate enough to get away without being observed.

I slept till noon and then, having made my toilette, I went to call on the pastor, to whom I praised Hedvig to the skies. This was the best way to get him to come to supper at The Scales the next day.

"We shall be in town," said I, "and can remain together as long as

we please, but do not forget to bring the amiable widow and her charming daughter."

He promised he would bring them both.

In the evening I went to see the syndic and his three friends, who naturally found me rather insensible to their charms. I excused myself by saying that I had a bad headache. I told them I had asked the young theologian to supper, and I invited the girls and the syndic to come, too, but, as I had foreseen, the latter would not hear of their going, as it would give rise to gossip.

I took care that the most exquisite wines should form an important feature of my supper. The pastor and the widow were both sturdy drinkers and I did my best to please them. When I saw that they were pretty mellow and were going over their old recollections, I made a sign to the girls and they immediately went out as if to go to a retiring-room. Under pretext of showing them the way, I went out, too, and took them into a room, telling them to wait for me.

I went back to the supper room and, finding the old friends taken up with each other and scarcely conscious of my presence, I gave them some punch and told them I would keep the young ladies company; they were looking at some pictures, I explained. I lost no time and showed them some extremely interesting sights. These stolen sweets have a wonderful charm. When we were to some extent satisfied, we went back and I plied the punch-ladle more and more freely. Helen praised the pictures to her mother and asked her to come and look at them.

"I don't care to," she replied.

"Well," said Helen, "let us go and see them again."

I thought this stratagem admirable and, going out with my two young sweethearts, we worked wonders. Hedvig philosophised over pleasure and told me she would never have known it if I had not chanced to meet her uncle. Helen did not speak; she was more voluptuous than her cousin.

Before we parted, I agreed to call on Helen's mother every day to ascertain the night I could spend with them before leaving Geneva. We broke up our party at two o'clock in the morning.

Three or four days after Helen told me briefly that Hedvig was to sleep with her that night and that she would leave the door open at the same time as before.

"I will be there."

"And I will be there to shut you up, but you cannot have a light, as the servant might see it."

I was exact to the time and, when ten o'clock struck, they came to fetch me in high glee.

"I forgot to tell you," said Helen, "that you would find a fowl there."

I felt hungry and made short work of it and then we gave ourselves up to happiness.

I had to set out on my travels in two days. I had received a couple

of letters from M. Raiberti. In the first he told me he had followed my instructions as to the Corticelli, and in the second that she would probably be paid for dancing at the carnival as first *figurante*. I had nothing to keep me in Geneva and Madame d'Urfé, according to our agreement, would be waiting for me in Lyons. I was therefore obliged to go there. Thus the night that I was to pass with my two charmers would be my last.

My lessons had taken effect and I found they had become past mistresses in the art of pleasure. But now and again joy gave place to sadness.

"We shall be wretched, sweetheart," said Hedvig, "and, if you like, we will come with you."

"I promise to come and see you before two years have expired," said I, and in fact they had not so long to wait.

I left them, worn out with my exertions, and I remained in bed all day. In the evening I went to see the syndic and his young friends. I found Helen there and she was cunning enough to feign not to be more vexed at my departure than the others, and, to further the deception, she allowed the syndic to kiss her. I followed suit and begged her to bid farewell for me to her learned cousin and to excuse my not taking leave of her in person.

The next day I set out in the early morning and reached Lyons on the following day. Madame d'Urfé was not there; she had gone to an estate of hers in Bresse. I found a letter in which she said she would be delighted to see me, and I waited on her without losing any time.

She greeted me with her ordinary cordiality and I told her I was going to Turin to meet Frédéric Gualdo, the head of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, and I revealed to her by the oracle that he would come with me to Marseilles and that there he would complete her happiness. According to this oracle, she would not go to Paris until she had seen us. The oracle also bade her wait for me at Lyons with young d'Aranda, who begged me to take him with me to Turin. It may be imagined that I succeeded in putting him off.

Madame d'Urfé had to wait a fortnight to get me fifty thousand francs, which I might require on my journey. In the course of this fortnight I made the acquaintance of Madame Pernon and spent a good deal of money with her husband, a rich mercer, in refurnishing my wardrobe. Madame Pernon was handsome and intelligent. She had a Milanese lover named Bono, who did business for a Swiss banker named Sacco. It was through her that Bono got Madame d'Urfé the fifty thousand francs I required. She also gave me the three dresses she had promised to the Countess Lascaris, but which that lady never saw.

One of these dresses was furred and was exquisitely beautiful. I left Lyons equipped like a prince and journeyed towards Turin, where I was to meet the famous Gualdo, who was none other than Ascanio Pogomas, whom I had summoned from Berne. I thought it would be easy to

make the fellow play the part I had destined for him, but I was cruelly deceived, as the reader will see.

I could not resist stopping at Chambéry to see my fair nun, whom I found looking beautiful and contented. She was grieving, however, for the young boarder, who had been taken from the convent and married off.

I got to Turin at the beginning of December and at Rivoli I found the Corticelli, who had been informed by the Chevalier de Raiberti of my arrival. She gave me a letter from this worthy gentleman, giving the address of the house he had taken for me, as I did not want to put up at an inn. I immediately went to take possession of my new lodging.

CHAPTER 93

THE Corticelli was as gentle as a lamb and left me as we got into Turin. I promised I would come to see her and immediately went to the house the chevalier had taken, which I found convenient in every way.

The worthy chevalier was not long in calling on me. He gave me an account of the moneys he had spent on the Corticelli, and handed over the rest to me.

"I am flush with money," I said, "and intend to invite my friends to supper frequently. Can you lay your hands on a good cook?"

"I know a pearl amongst cooks," said he, "and you can have him directly."

"You, chevalier, are the pearl of men. Get me this wonder, tell him I am hard to please, and agree on the sum I am to pay him per month."

The cook, who was an excellent one, came the same evening.

"It would be a good idea," said Raiberti, "to call on the Count d'Aglié. He knows that the Corticelli is your mistress, and he has given a formal order to Madame Pacienza, the lady with whom she lives, that, when you come to see her, you are not to be left alone together."

This order amused me and, as I did not care about the Corticelli, it did not trouble me in the least, though Raiberti, who thought I was in love with her, seemed to pity me.

"Since she has been here," he said, "her conduct has been irreproachable."

"I am glad to hear that."

"You might have her take some lessons from the dancing-master Dupré," said he. "He will no doubt give her something to do at the carnival."

I promised to follow his advice and I then paid a visit to the superintendent of police.

He received me well, complimented me on my return to Turin and then added, with a smile, "I warn you that I have been informed that you keep a mistress, and I have given strict orders to the respectable woman with whom she lives not to leave her alone with you."

"I am glad to hear it," I replied, "the more so as I fear her mother is not a person of very rigid morals. I had advised the Chevalier Raiberti of my intentions with regard to her and I am glad to see that he has carried them out so well. I hope the girl will show herself worthy of your protection."

"Do you think of staying here throughout the carnival?"

"Yes, if Your Excellency approves."

"It depends entirely on your good conduct."

"A few peccadilloes excepted, my conduct is always above reproach."

"There are some peccadilloes we do not tolerate here. Have you seen the Chevalier Osorio?"

"I think of calling on him to-day or to-morrow."

"I hope you will remember me to him."

He rang his bell and bowed and the audience was over.

The Chevalier Osorio received me at his office and gave me a most gracious reception. After I had given him an account of my visit to the superintendent, he asked me, with a smile, if I felt inclined to submit with docility to not seeing my mistress in freedom.

"Certainly," said I, "for I am not in love with her."

Osorio looked at me slyly and observed, "Somehow I don't think your indifference will be very pleasing to the virtuous duenna."

I understood what he meant, but personally I was delighted not to be able to see the Corticelli save in the presence of a female dragon. It would make people talk and I loved a little scandal and felt curious to see what would happen.

When I returned to my house, I found the Genoese, Passano, a bad poet and worse painter, to whom I had decided to give the part of a Rosicrucian because there was something in his appearance which inspired, if not respect, at least awe and a certain feeling of fear,—which, however, was only a natural presentiment that the man must be either a clever rogue or a morose and sullen scholar.

I had him sup with me and gave him a room on the third floor, telling him not to leave it without my permission. At supper I found him insipid in conversation, drunken, ignorant and ill-disposed, and I already repented of having taken him under my protection; but the thing was done.

The next day, feeling curious to see how the Corticelli was lodged, I called on her, taking with me a piece of Lyons silk.

I found her and her mother in the landlady's room and, as I came in, the latter said that she was delighted to see me and hoped I would often dine with them. I thanked her briefly and spoke to the girl coolly enough.

"Show me your room," said I. She took me there in her mother's company. "Here is something to make you a winter's dress," said I, showing her the silk.

"Is this from the marchioness?"

"No, it is from me."

"But where are the three dresses she said she would give me?"

"You know very well on what conditions you were to have them, so let us say no more about it."

She unfolded the silk, which she liked very much, but she said she must have some trimmings. The Pacienza offered her services and said she would send for a dressmaker who lived close by. I acquiesced with a nod and, as soon as she had left the room, Signora Laura said she was very sorry to be able to receive me only in the presence of the landlady.

"I should have thought," said I, "that a virtuous person like you would be delighted."

"I thank God for it every morning and night."

"You infernal old hypocrite!" said I, looking contemptuously at her. "Upon my word, anybody who didn't know you would be taken in."

In a few minutes Victorine and another girl came in with their handboxes.

"Are you still at Madame R—'s?" said I.

"Yes, sir," said she, with a blush.

When the Corticelli had chosen what she wanted, I told Victorine to present my compliments to her mistress and tell her I would call and pay for the articles.

The landlady had also sent for a dressmaker and, while the Corticelli was being measured, she showed me her figure and said she wanted a corset. I jested on the pregnancy with which she had threatened me and of which there was now no trace, pitying Count N— for being deprived of the joys of fatherhood. I then gave her what money she might require and took my leave. She escorted me to the door and asked me if she should have the pleasure of seeing me again before long.

"It's a pleasure, is it?" I replied. "Well, I don't know when you will have it again; that depends on my leisure and my fancy."

It is certain that, if I had had amorous feelings or even curiosity about the girl, I should not have left her in that house for a moment; but I repeat, my love for her had entirely vanished. There was one thing, however, which annoyed me intolerably, namely, that, in spite of my coolness towards her, the little hussy pretended to think I had forgotten and forgiven everything.

On leaving the Corticelli, I proceeded to call on my bankers, amongst others on M. Martin, whose wife was justly famous for her wit and beauty.

I chanced to meet this horse-dealing Jew, who took me to call on his daughter Leah. She was still pretty, but married, and her figure was too rounded for my taste. She and her husband welcomed me with great warmth, but I cared for her no longer and did not wish to see her again.

I called on Madame R—, who had been awaiting me impatiently ever since Victorine had brought news of me. I sat down by the counter and had the pleasure of hearing from her lips the amorous histories of Turin for the past few months.

"Victorine and Caton are the only two of the old set that still remain, but I have replaced the others."

"Has Victorine found anyone to operate on her yet?"

"No, she is just as you left her, but a gentleman who is in love with her is going to take her to Milan."

This gentleman was the Comte de Pérouse, whose acquaintance I made three years afterwards at Milan. I shall speak of him in due time. Madame R— told me that, in consequence of her getting into trouble several times with the police, she had been obliged to promise the Count d'Aglié to send the girls only to ladies and consequently, if I found any of them to my taste, I should be obliged to make friends with their relatives and take them to some festa. She showed me the girls in the workroom, but I did not think any of them worth taking trouble about.

She talked about the Pacienza dame and, when I told her that I was keeping the Corticelli and of the hard conditions to which I was obliged to submit, she exclaimed with astonishment and amused me by her jests on the subject.

"You are in good hands, my dear sir," said she. "The old woman is not only a spy of d'Aglié's but a professional procuress. I wonder the Chevalier Raiberti placed the girl with her."

She was not so surprised when I told her that the chevalier had good reasons for his action and that I myself had good reasons of my own for wishing the Corticelli to remain there.

Our conversation was interrupted by a customer who wanted silk stockings. Hearing him speak of dancing, I asked if he could tell me the address of Dupré, the ballet-master.

"No one could tell you better, sir, for I am Dupré, at your service."

"I am delighted at this happy chance. The Chevalier Raiberti gave me to understand that you might be able to give dancing lessons to a ballet girl of my acquaintance."

"M. de Raiberti mentioned your name to me this morning. You must be the Chevalier de Seingalt."

"Exactly."

"I can give the young lady lessons every morning at nine o'clock at my own home."

"No, do you come to her house, but at whatever hour you like. I will pay you and I hope you will make her one of your best pupils. I must warn you, however, that she is not a novice."

"I will call on her to-day, and to-morrow I will tell you what I can make of her; but I think I had better tell you my terms. I charge three Piedmontese livres a lesson."

"I think that is very reasonable; I will call on you to-morrow."

"You do me honour. Here is my address. If you like to come in the afternoon, you will see the rehearsal of a ballet."

"Is it not rehearsed at the theatre?"

"Yes, but at the theatre no onlookers are allowed, by order of the superintendent of police."

"This superintendent of yours puts his finger into a good many pies."

"Too many."

"But at your own house anybody may come?"

"Undoubtedly, but I could not have the dancers there if my wife were not present. The superintendent knows her and has great confidence in her."

"You will see me at the rehearsal."

The wretched superintendent had erected a fearful system of surveillance over the lovers of pleasure, but it must be confessed that he was often cheated. Voluptuousness was all the more enjoyable because of the skill required to circumvent the supervision; and so it ever will be while men have passions and women have desires. To love and enjoy, to desire and to satisfy one's desires, such is the circle in which we move and whence we can never be turned aside. When restrictions are placed upon the passions, as in Turkey, they still attain their ends, but by methods destructive to morality.

At the worthy Mazzoli's I found two gentlemen to whom she introduced me. One was old and ugly, decorated with the Order of the White Eagle; his name was Count Borromeo. The other, young and brisk, was Count A— B—, of Milan. After they had gone, I was informed that they were paying assiduous court to the Chevalier Raiberti, from whom they hoped to obtain certain privileges for their estates, which were under Sardinian rule.

The Milanese count had not a penny and the Lord of the Borromeo Isles was not much better off. He had ruined himself with women and, not being able to live in Milan, he had taken refuge in the fairest of his isles and enjoyed there perpetual spring and very little else. I paid him a visit on my return from Spain, but I shall relate our meeting when I come to my adventures, my pleasures, my misfortunes and, above all, my follies there, for of such threads was the web of my life composed and folly was the prominent element.

The conversation turned on my house and the lively Mazzoli asked me how I liked my cook. I replied that I had not yet tried him, but I proposed to put him to the test the next day if she and the gentlemen would do me the honour of supping with me.

The invitation was accepted and she promised to bring her dear chevalier with her and to notify him of the event, as his health allowed him to eat only once a day.

I called on Dupré in the afternoon. I saw the dancers, male and female, the latter accompanied by their mothers, who stood on one side muffled up in thick cloaks. As I passed them under review in my lordly manner, I noticed that one of them still looked fresh and pretty, which augured well for her daughter, though the fruit does not always correspond to the tree.

Dupré introduced me to his wife, who was young and pretty but had been obliged to leave the theatre owing to the weakness of her chest. She told me that, if the Corticelli would work hard, her husband would make a great dancer of her, as her figure was eminently suited for dancing. While I was talking with Madame Dupré, the Corticelli

(late Lascaris) came running up to me with the air of a favourite and told me she wanted some ribbons and laces to make a bonnet. The other girls began to whisper to each other and, guessing what they must be saying, I turned to Dupré without taking any notice of Mlle. Madcap and gave him twelve pistoles, saying that I would pay for the lessons three months in advance and hoped he would bring his new pupil along well. Such a heavy payment in advance caused general surprise, which I enjoyed, though pretending not to be aware of it. Now I know that I acted foolishly, but I have promised to speak the truth in these *Memoirs*, which will not see the light till all light has left my eyes, and I will keep my promise. I have always been greedy of distinction; I have always loved to draw the eyes of men towards me, but I must also add that, if I have humiliated anyone, it has always been a proud man or a fool, for it has been my rule to please everyone if I can.

I sat on one side, the better to observe the swarm of girls, and I soon fixed my eyes on one whose appearance struck me. She had a fine figure, delicate features, a noble air and a patient look which interested me in the highest degree. She was dancing with a man who did not scruple to upbraid her in the coarsest manner when she made any mistakes, but she bore it without replying, though an expression of contempt mingled with the sweetness of her face.

Instinct drew me to the mother I have remarked on, and I asked her to whom the dancer that interested me belonged.

"I am her mother," she replied.

"You, madame! I should not have thought it possible."

"I was very young when she was born."

"I should think so. Where do you come from?"

"I am from Lucca, and, what is more, I am a poor widow."

"How can you be poor when you are still young and handsome and have an angel for a daughter?"

She replied only by an expressive glance. I understood her reserve and stayed by her without speaking. Soon after Agatha, as her daughter was named, came up to her to ask for a handkerchief to wipe her face.

"Allow me to offer you mine," said I. It was a white handkerchief, scented with otto of roses; this latter circumstance gave her an excuse for accepting it but, after smelling it, she wanted to return it to me.

"You have not used it," said I. "Do so."

She obeyed and then returned it to me with a bow by way of thanks.

"You must not give it me back, fair Agatha, till you have had it washed."

She smiled and gave it to her mother, glancing at me in a grateful manner, which I considered of good omen.

"May I have the pleasure of calling on you?" said I.

"I cannot receive you, sir, except in the presence of my landlady."

"This cursed restriction is general in Turin, then?"

"Yes, the superintendent uses everybody in the same way."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again here."

In the evening I had one of the best suppers I ever had in my life, if I except those I enjoyed during my stay in Turin. My cook was worthy of a place in the kitchen of Lucullus; but, without detracting from his skill, I must do justice to the products of the country. Everything is delicious; game, fish, birds, meat, vegetables, fruit, milk and truffles—all are worthy of the table of the greatest *gourmets* and the wines of the country yield to none. What a pity that strangers do not enjoy liberty at Turin! It is true that better society and more politeness, such as are found in several French and Italian towns, are to be wished for.

The beauty of the women of Turin is no doubt due to the excellence of the air and diet.

I had not much trouble in extracting a promise from Madame Mazzoli and the two counts to sup with me every night, but the Chevalier de Raiberti would only promise to come whenever he could.

At the Carignan Theatre, where opera bouffe was being played, I saw Redegonde, with whom I had failed in Florence. She saw me in the pit and gave me a smile, so I wrote to her, offering my services if the mother had changed her way of thinking. She answered that her mother was still the same but that, if I would ask the Corticelli, she could come and sup with me, though the mother would doubtless have to be of the party. I gave her no answer, as the terms she named were by no means to my taste.

I had a letter from Madame du Romain, enclosing one from M. de Choiseul to M. de Chauvelin, the French ambassador at Turin. It will be remembered that I had known this worthy nobleman at Soleure and had been treated with great politeness by him, but I wished to have a more perfect title to his acquaintance; hence I asked Madame du Romain to give me a letter.

M. de Chauvelin received me with the greatest cordiality, and, reproaching me for having thought a letter of introduction necessary, introduced me to his charming wife, who was no less kind than her husband. Three or four days later he asked me to dine with him and I met at his table M. Imberti, the Venetian ambassador, who said he was very sorry not to be able to present me at Court. On hearing the reason, M. de Chauvelin offered to present me himself, but I thought it best to decline with thanks. No doubt it would have been a great honour, but the result would be that I should be more spied on than ever in this town of spies, where the most indifferent actions do not pass unnoticed. My pleasures would have been interfered with.

Count Borromeo continued to honour me by coming every night to sup with me, preserving his dignity the while, for, as he accompanied Madame Mazzoli, he avoided the suspicion that he came because he was in need of a meal. Count A— B— acted more frankly and I was pleased with him. He told me one day that the way I put up with his visits made him extremely grateful to Providence, for his wife could not send him any money and he could not afford to pay for his dinner at the

inn, so that, if it were not for my kindness, he would often be obliged to go hungry to bed. He showed me his wife's letters; he had evidently a high opinion of her.

"I hope," he would say, "that you will come and stay with us in Milan and that she will please you."

He had been in the service of Spain and, by what he said, I judged his wife to be a pleasing brunette of twenty-five or twenty-six. The count wrote her how I had lent him money several times and of my goodness to him and she replied, begging him to express her gratitude to me and to make me promise to stay with them in Milan. She wrote wittily and her letters interested me to such an extent that I gave a formal promise to journey to Milan, if it were only for the sake of seeing her.

I confess that, in doing so, I was overcome by my feelings of curiosity. I knew they were poor and I should not have given a promise which would either bring them into difficulties or expose me to paying too dearly for my lodging. However, by way of excuse, I can only say that curiosity is near akin to love. I fancied the countess as sentimental as an Englishwoman, as passionate as a Spaniard, as caressing as a Frenchwoman and, as I had a good enough opinion of my own merit, I did not doubt for a moment that she would respond to my affection. With these pleasant delusions in my head, I counted on exciting the jealousy of all the ladies and gentlemen of Milan. I had plenty of money and I longed for an opportunity of spending it.

Nevertheless, I went every day to rehearsal at Dupré's and I soon got madly in love with Agatha. Madame Dupré, won over by several presents I made her, received my confidences with kindness and, by asking Agatha and her mother to dinner, procured me the pleasure of a more private meeting with my charmer. I profited by the opportunity to make known my feelings and obtained some slight favours, but so slight were they that my flame only grew the fiercer.

Agatha kept on telling me that everybody knew the Corticelli was my mistress and that for all the gold in the world she would not have it said that she was my makeshift, since I could not see the Corticelli in private. I swore to her that I did not love the Corticelli and kept her only to prevent M. Raiberti being compromised, but all this was of no avail; she had formed her plans and nothing would content her but a formal rupture which would give all Turin to understand that I loved her and her alone. On these conditions she promised me her heart and everything which follows in such cases.

I loved her too well not to endeavour to satisfy her, since my satisfaction depended on hers. With this idea, I got Dupré to give a ball at my expense in some house outside the town and to invite all the dancers, male and female, who were engaged for the carnival at Turin. Every gentleman had the right to bring a lady to have supper and look on, but only the professional dancers were to be allowed to dance.

I told Dupré I would look after the refreshment department and he might tell everybody that no expense was to be spared. I also provided

carriages and sedan chairs for the ladies, but nobody was to know that I was furnishing the money. Dupré saw that there was profit in store for him, and went about it at once. He found a suitable house, asked the lady dancers and distributed about fifty tickets.

Agatha and her mother were the only persons who knew that the project was mine and that I was responsible to a great extent for the expenses; but these facts were generally known the day after the ball.

Agatha had no dress that was good enough, so I charged Madame Dupré to provide one at my expense and I was well served. It is well known that, when this sort of people dip their fingers into others' purses, they are not sparing, but that was just what I wanted. Agatha promised to dance all the quadrilles with me and to return to Turin with Madame Dupré.

On the day fixed for the ball I stayed to dinner at the Dupré's, to be present at Agatha's toilette. Her dress was a rich and newly made Lyons silk and the trimming was exquisite Alençon point lace, of which the girl did not know the value. Madame R—, who had arranged the dress, and Madame Dupré had received instructions to say nothing about it to her.

When Agatha was ready to start, I told her that the earrings she was wearing were not good enough for her dress.

"That's true," said Madame Dupré, "and it's a great pity."

"Unfortunately," said the mother, "my poor girl hasn't another pair."

"I have some pretty imitation pendants which I could lend you," said I. "They are really very brilliant."

I had taken care to put the earrings which Madame d'Urfé had intended for the Countess Lascaris in my pocket. I drew them out and they were greatly admired.

"One would swear they were real diamonds," said Madame Dupré.

I put them in Agatha's ears. She admired them very much and said that all the other girls would be jealous, as they would certainly take them for real stones.

I went home and made an elaborate toilette and, on arriving at the ball, found Agatha dancing with Lord Percy, a young fool who was the son of the Duke of Northumberland and an extravagant spendthrift.

I noticed several handsome ladies from Turin who, being merely on-lookers, might be thinking that the ball was given for their amusement, like the fly on the chariot wheel. All the ambassadors were present and amongst others M. de Chauvelin, who told me that, to make everything complete, my pretty housekeeper at Soleure was wanting.

The Marquis and Marchioness de Prié were there also. The marquis did not care to dance, so was playing a little game of quinze with a rude gamester, who would not let the marquis's mistress look over his cards. She saw me, but pretended not to recognise me, the trick I had played her at Aix being probably enough to last her for some time.

The minuets came to an end and Dupré announced the quadrilles and I was glad to see the Chevalier Ville-Follet dancing with the Cor-

ticelli. My partner was Agatha, who had great difficulty in getting rid of Lord Percy, though she told him she was fully engaged.

Minuets and quadrilles followed each other in succession and refreshments began to make their appearance. I was delighted to see that the refreshment counter was furnished with the utmost liberality. The Piedmontese, who are great at calculations, estimated that Dupré must lose by it; the ring of champagne corks was continuous.

Feeling tired, I asked Agatha to sit down and I was telling her how I loved her when Madame de Chauvelin and another lady interrupted us. I rose to give them my place and Agatha imitated my example; but Madame de Chauvelin made her sit down beside her and praised her dress and, above all, the lace trimmings. The other lady said how pretty her earrings were and what a pity it was that those imitation stones would lose their brilliance in time. Madame de Chauvelin, who knew something about precious stones, said that they would never lose their brilliance as they were diamonds of the first water.

"Is it not so?" she added, to Agatha, who in the candour of her heart confessed that they were imitation and that I had lent them to her.

At this Madame de Chauvelin burst out laughing and said:

"M. de Seingalt has deceived you, my dear child. A gentleman of his caste does not lend imitation jewellery to such a pretty girl as you are. Your earrings are set with magnificent diamonds."

She blushed, for my silence confirmed the lady's assertion, and she felt that the fact of my having lent her such stones was a palpable proof of the great esteem in which I held her.

Madame de Chauvelin asked me to dance a minuet with Agatha and my partner executed the dance with wonderful grace. When it was over, Madame de Chauvelin thanked me and told me she should always remember our dancing together at Soleure and that she hoped I would dance again with her in her own house. A profound bow showed her how flattered I felt by this compliment.

The ball did not come to an end till four o'clock in the morning and I did not leave it till I saw Agatha going away in company with Madame Dupré.

I was still in bed the next morning when my man told me a pretty woman wanted to speak to me. I had her in and was delighted to find it was Agatha's mother. I made her sit down beside me and gave her a cup of chocolate. As soon as we were alone, she drew my earrings from her pocket, and said, with a smile, that she had just been showing them to a jeweller, who had offered her a thousand sequins for them.

"The man's mad," said I, "you ought to have let him have them; they are not worth four sequins."

So saying, I drew her to my arms and gave her a kiss. Feeling that she had shared in the kiss and seemed to like it, I went farther and at last we spent a couple of hours in showing what a high opinion we had of each other.

Afterwards we both looked rather astonished and it was the beautiful mother who first broke the silence.

"Am I to tell my girl," said she, with a smile, "of the way in which you have proved to me that you love her?"

"I leave that to your discretion, my dear," said I. "I have certainly proved that I love you, but it does not follow that I do not adore your daughter. In fact, I burn for her, and yet, if we are not careful to avoid being alone together, what has just happened between us will often happen again."

"It is hard to resist you and it is possible I may have occasion to speak to you again in private."

"You may be sure you will always be welcome and all I ask of you is not to put any obstacles in the way of my suit with Agatha."

"I also have a favour to ask."

"If it is within my power, you may be sure I will grant it."

"Very good! Then tell me if these earrings are real and what was your intention in putting them in my daughter's ears?"

"The diamonds are perfectly genuine and my intention was that Agatha should keep them as a proof of my affection."

She heaved a sigh and then asked me to invite them to supper together with Dupré and his wife, whenever I pleased. I thanked her, gave her ten sequins and sent her away happy.

On reflection I decided that I had never seen a more sensible woman than Agatha's mother. It would have been impossible to announce the success of my suit in a more delicate or more perspicuous manner.

My readers will no doubt guess that I seized the opportunity and brought this interesting affair to a conclusion. The same evening I asked Dupré and his wife, Agatha and her mother to sup with me the next day, in addition to my usual company. But, as I was leaving Dupré's, I had an adventure.

My man, who was a great rascal but who behaved well on this occasion, ran up to me panting for breath and said triumphantly, "Sir, I have been looking for you to warn you that I have just seen the Chevalier de Ville-Follet slip into Madame Pacienza's house and I suspect he is making an amorous call on the Corticelli."

I immediately walked to the abode of the worthy spy in high spirits and, hoping that my servant's guess had been correct, I walked in and found the landlady and the mother sitting together. Without noticing them, I was making my way towards the Corticelli's room when the two old ladies arrested my course, telling me that the signora was not well and needed rest. I pushed them aside and entered the room so swiftly and suddenly that I found the gentleman in a state of nature, while the girl remained stretched on the bed as if petrified by my sudden apparition.

"Sir," said I, "I hope you will pardon me for coming in without knocking."

"Wait a moment, wait a moment."

Far from waiting, I went away in high glee and told the story to

the Chevalier Raiberti, who enjoyed it as well as I did. I asked him to warn the Pacienza woman that from that day I would pay nothing for the Corticelli, who had ceased to belong to me. He approved and said, "I suppose you will not be going to complain to the Count d'Aglié?"

"It is only fools who complain, above all in circumstances like these."

This scandalous story would have been consigned to forgetfulness if it had not been for the Chevalier de Ville-Follet's indiscretion. He felt angry at being interrupted in the middle of the business and, remembering he had seen my man just before, fixed on him as the informer. Meeting him in the street, the chevalier reproached him for spying, whereon the impudent rascal replied that he was answerable only to his master and that it was his duty to serve me in all things. On this, the chevalier caned him and the man went to complain to the superintendent, who summoned Ville-Follet to appear before him and explain his conduct. Having nothing to fear, he told the whole story.

The Chevalier de Raiberti, too, was very ill received when he went to tell Madame Pacienza that neither he nor I were going to pay her anything more in future, but he would listen to no defence. The chevalier came to sup with me and informed me that, on leaving the house, he had met a police sergeant who, he concluded, had come to cite the landlady to appear before the Count d'Aglié.

The next day, just as I was going to M. de Chauvelin's ball, I received to my great surprise a note from the superintendent begging me to call on him, as he had something to communicate to me. I immediately ordered my chairmen to take me to his residence.

M. d'Aglié received me in private with great politeness and, after giving me a chair, began a long and pathetic discourse, the gist of which was that it was my duty to forgive this little slip of my mistress's.

"That's exactly what I am going to do," said I, "and for the rest of my days I never wish to see the Corticelli again, either to make or mar her affairs, and for all this I am greatly obliged to the Chevalier de Ville-Follet."

"I see you are angry. Come, come! you must not abandon the girl for that. I will have the Pacienza woman punished in such a way as to satisfy you and I will place the girl in a respectable family, where you can go and see her in perfect liberty."

"I am greatly obliged to you for your kindness, indeed I am grateful; but I despise the Pacienza too heartily to wish for punishment and, as to the Corticelli and her mother, they are two female swindlers who have given me too much trouble already. I am well quit of them."

"You must confess, however, that you had no right to make a forcible entry into a room in a house which does not belong to you."

"I had not the right, I confess, but, if I had not taken it, I could never have had a certain proof of the perfidy of my mistress; and I should have been obliged to continue supporting her, though she entertained other lovers."

"The Corticello maintains that you are her debtor and not *vice versa*. She says that the diamonds you gave to another girl belong of right to her and that Madame d'Urfé, whom I have the honour to know, presented her with them."

"She is a liar! Since you know Madame d'Urfé, kindly write to her (she is in Lyons) and, if the marchioness replies that I owe the wretched girl anything, be sure that I will discharge the debt. I have a hundred thousand francs in good banks of this town and the money will be a sufficient surety for the earrings I have disposed of."

"I am sorry that things have happened so."

"And I am very glad, as I have rid myself of a burden that was hard to bear."

Thereupon we bowed politely to one another and I left the office.

At the French ambassador's ball I heard so much talk of my adventure that at last I refused to reply to any more questions on the subject. The general opinion was that the whole affair was a trifle of which I could not honourably take any notice, but I thought myself the best judge of my own honour and was determined to take no notice of the opinions of others. The Chevalier de Ville-Follet came up to me and said that, if I abandoned the Corticelli for such a trifle, he should feel obliged to give me satisfaction. I shook his hand, saying, "My dear chevalier, it will be enough if you do not demand satisfaction of me."

He understood how the land lay and said no more about it; but not so his sister, the Marchioness de Prié, who made a dead set for me after we had danced together. She was handsome and might have been victorious if she had liked, but luckily she did not think of exerting her power and so gained nothing.

Three days after Madame de St. Giles, a great power in Turin and a kind of protecting deity to all actresses, summoned me to her presence by a liveried footman. Guessing what she wanted, I called on her unceremoniously in a morning coat. She received me politely and began to talk of the Corticelli affair with great affability, but I did not like her and replied dryly that I had had no hesitation in abandoning the girl to the protection of the gallant gentleman with whom I had surprised her *in flagrante delicto*. She told me I should be sorry for it and that she would publish a little story which she had already read and which did not do me much credit. I replied that I never changed my mind and that threats were of no avail with me. With that parting shot I left her.

I did not attach much importance to the town gossip, but a week after I received a manuscript containing an account, accurate in most respects, of my relations with the Corticelli and Madame d'Urfé, but so ill-written and badly expressed that nobody could read it without weariness. It did not make the slightest impression on me and I stayed a fortnight longer in Turin without its causing me the slightest annoyance. I saw the Corticelli again in Paris six months after and will speak of our meeting in due time.

The day after M. de Chauvelin's ball I asked Agatha, her mother,

the Duprés and my usual company to supper. It was the mother's business to so arrange matters that the earrings should become Agatha's lawful property, so I left everything to her. I knew she would manage to introduce the subject and, while we were at supper, she said that the common report in Turin was that I had given her daughter a pair of diamond earrings worth five hundred louis which the Corticelli claimed as hers by right.

"I do not know," she added, "if they are real diamonds or if they belong to the Corticelli, but I do know that my girl has received no such present from the gentleman."

"Well, well," said I, "we will have no more surmises in the matter." And, going up to Agatha, I put the earrings on her, saying, "Dearest Agatha, I make you a present of them before this company and my giving them to you now is a proof that hitherto they have belonged to me."

Everybody applauded and I read in the girl's eyes that I should have no cause to regret my generosity.

We then fell to speaking of the affair of Ville-Follet and the Corticelli and of the efforts that had been made to compel me to retain the latter. The Chevalier Raiberti said that in my place he would have offered Madame de St. Giles or the superintendent to continue paying for her board, but merely as an act of charity, and that I could have deposited money with either of them.

"I should be very glad to do so," said I, and the next day the worthy chevalier made the necessary arrangements with Madame de St. Giles and I furnished the necessary moneys.

In spite of this charitable action, the wretched manuscript came out, but, as I have said, without doing me any harm. The superintendent made the Corticelli live in the same house with Redegonde, and Madame Pacienza was left in peace.

After supper we all masked, with the exception of the Chevalier Raiberti, and went to the ball at the opera house. I soon seized the opportunity of escaping with Agatha and she granted me all that love can desire. All constraint was banished; she was my titular mistress and we were proud of belonging to one another, for we loved each other. The suppers I had given at my house had set me perfectly at liberty and the superintendent could do nothing to thwart our love, though he was informed of it, so well are the spies of Turin organised.

Divine Providence made use of me as its instrument in making Agatha's fortune. It may be said that Providence might have chosen a more moral method, but are we to presume to limit the paths of Providence to the narrow circle of our prejudices and conventions? It has its own ways, which often appear dark to us because of our ignorance. At all events, if I am able to continue the *Memoirs* for six or seven years more, the reader will see that Agatha showed herself grateful. But to return to our subject.

The happiness we enjoyed by day and night was so great, Agatha was so affectionate and I so amorous, that we should certainly have

remained united for some time if it had not been for the event I am about to relate. It made me leave Turin much sooner than I had intended, for I had not purposed to visit the wonderful Spanish countess at Milan till Lent. The husband of the Spanish lady had finished his business and left Turin, thanking me with tears in his eyes; if it had not been for me, he would not have been able to quit the town, for I paid divers small debts he had incurred and gave him the wherewithal for his journey. Often is vice thus found allied to virtue or masking in virtue's guise; but what matter? I allowed myself to be taken in and did not wish to be disabused. I do not seek to conceal my faults. I have always led a profligate life and have not always been very delicate in the choice of means to gratify my passions, but even amidst my vices I was always a passionate lover of virtue. Benevolence, especially, has always had a great charm for me and I have never failed to exercise it except when restrained by the desire of vengeance, a vice which always had a controlling influence on my actions.

Lord Percy, as I have remarked, was deeply in love with my Agatha. He followed her about everywhere, was present at all the rehearsals, waited for her in the wings and called on her every day, although her landlady, a duenna of the Pacienza school, would never let her see him alone. The principal methods of seduction, rich presents, had not been spared, but Agatha persistently refused them all and forbade her duenna to take anything from the young nobleman. Agatha had no liking for him and kept me well informed of all his actions and we used to laugh at him together. I knew that I possessed her heart and consequently Lord Percy's attempts made me neither angry nor jealous—nay, they flattered my self-esteem, for his slighted love made my own happiness stand out in greater relief. Everybody knew that Agatha remained faithful to me and at last Lord Percy was so convinced of the hopelessness of the attempt that he resolved on making a friend of me and winning me over to his interests.

With the true Englishman's boldness and coolness, he came to me one morning and asked me to invite him to breakfast. I welcomed him in the French manner, that is, with combined cordiality and politeness, and he was soon completely at his ease.

With insular directness he went straight to the point at the first interview, declared his love for Agatha and proposed an exchange, which amused but did not offend me, as I knew that such bargains were common in England.

"I know," said he, "that you are in love with Redegonde and have long tried vainly to obtain her; now I am willing to exchange her for Agatha and all I want to know is what sum of money you want over and above?"

"You are very good, my dear lord, but to determine the excess of value would require a good mathematician. Redegonde is all very well and inspires me with curiosity, but what is she compared to Agatha?"

"I know, I know, and therefore offer you any sum you like to mention."

Percy was very rich and very passionate. I am sure that, if I had named twenty-five thousand guineas as overplus—or rather as exchange, for I did not care for Redegonde—he would have said “done.” However, I did not and I am glad of it. Even now, when a hundred thousand francs would be a fortune to me, I never repent of my delicacy.

After we had breakfasted merrily together, I told him that I liked him well but that it would be well first to ascertain whether the two commodities would consent to exchange masters.

“I am sure of Redegonde’s consent,” said Lord Percy.

“But I am not at all sure of Agatha’s,” said I.

“Why not?”

“I have very strong grounds for supposing that she would not consent to the arrangement. What reasons have you for the contrary opinion?”

“She will show her sense.”

“But she loves me.”

“Well, Redegonde loves me.”

“I dare say, but does she love me?”

“I am sure I don’t know, but she will love you.”

“Have you consulted her upon the point?”

“No, but it is all the same. What I want to know now is whether you approve of my plan and how much you want for the exchange, for your Agatha is worth much more than my Redegonde.”

“I am delighted to hear you do my mistress justice. As for the money question, we will speak of that later. I will first get Agatha’s opinion and let you know the result to-morrow morning.”

The plan amused me and, though I was passionately attached to Agatha, I knew my inconstant nature well enough to be aware that another woman, maybe not so fair as she, would soon make me forget her. I therefore resolved to push the matter through if I could do so in a manner that would be advantageous for her.

What surprised me was that the young nobleman had gained possession of Redegonde, whose mother appeared so intractable, but I knew what an influence caprice has on woman and this explained the enigma.

Agatha came to supper as usual and laughed heartily when I told her of Lord Percy’s proposal.

“Tell me,” said I, “if you would agree to the change?”

“I will do just as you like,” said she, “and, if the money he offers be acceptable to you, I advise you to close with him.”

I could see by the tone of her voice that she was jesting, but her reply did not please me. I should have liked to have my vanity flattered by a peremptory refusal and consequently I felt angry. My face grew grave and Agatha became melancholy.

“We will see,” said I, “how it all ends.”

Next day I went to breakfast with the Englishman and told him Agatha was willing but that I must first hear what Redegonde had to say.

"Quite right," he observed.

"I should require to know how we are to live together."

"The four of us had better go masked to the first ball at the Carignan Theatre. We will sup at a house which belongs to me and there the bargain can be struck."

The party took place according to agreement and at the given signal we all left the ballroom. My lord's carriage was in waiting and we all drove away and got down at a house I seemed to know. We entered the hall and the first thing I saw was the Corticelli. This aroused my choler and, taking Percy aside, I told him that such a trick was unworthy of a gentleman. He laughed and said he thought I should like her to be thrown in and that two pretty women were surely worth as much as Agatha. This amusing answer made me less angry; but, calling him a madman, I took Agatha by the arm and went out without staying for any explanations. I would not make use of his carriage and, instead of returning to the ball, we went home in sedan-chairs and spent a delicious night in each other's arms.

CHAPTER 94

FAR from punishing the Corticelli by lodging her with Redegonde, the Count d'Aglié seemed to have encouraged her; and I was not sorry for it, since, as long as she did not trouble me any more, I did not care how many lovers she had. She had become a great friend of Redegonde and did exactly as she pleased, for their duenna was much more easy-going than the Pacienza.

Nobody knew of the trick which Lord Percy had played me, and I took care to say nothing about it. However, he did not give up his designs on Agatha; his passion for her was too violent. He hit upon an ingenious method for carrying out his plans. I have already said that Percy was very rich and spent his money wildly, not caring at what expenditure he gratified his passion. I was the last person to reproach him for his extravagance and in a country where money is always scarce his guineas opened every door to him.

Four or five days after the night of the ball, Agatha came to tell me that the manager of the Alexandria Theatre had asked her if she would take the part of second dancer throughout the carnival time.

"He offered me sixty sequins," she added, "and I told him I would let him know by to-morrow. Do you advise me to accept his offer?"

"If you love me, dearest Agatha, you will prove it by refusing all engagements for a year. You know I will let you want for nothing. I will get you the best masters and in that time you can perfect your dancing and will be able to ask for a first-class appointment, with a salary of five hundred sequins a year."

"Mamma thinks I should accept the offer, as the dancing on the stage will improve my style and I can study under a good master all the same. I think myself that dancing in public would do me good."

"There is reason in what you say, but you do not need the sixty sequins. You will dishonour me by accepting such a poor offer and do yourself harm, too, as you will not be able to ask for a good salary after accepting such a small one."

"But sixty sequins is not so bad for a carnival engagement."

"But you don't need sixty sequins; you can have them without dancing at all. If you love me, I repeat, you will tell the manager that you are going to rest for a year."

"I will do what you please, but it seems to me the best plan would be to ask an exorbitant sum."

"You are right; that is a good idea. Tell him you must be first dancer and your salary must be five hundred sequins."

"I will do so and am only too happy to be able to prove that I love you."

Agatha had plenty of inborn common sense, which only needed development. With that and the beauty which Heaven had given her, her future was assured. She was eventually happy and she deserved to be.

The next day she told me that the manager did not appear at all astonished at her demands.

"He reflected a few minutes," said she, "and told me he must think it over and would see me again. It would be amusing if he took me at my word, would it not?"

"Yes, but we should then have to inquire whether he is a madman or a beggar on the verge of bankruptcy."

"And if he turns out to be a man of means?"

"In that case you would be obliged to accept."

"That is easily said and easily done, but have I sufficient talent? Where shall I find an actor to dance with me?"

"I will engage to find you one. As to talent, you have enough and to spare; but you will see that it will come to nothing."

All the time I felt a presentiment that she would be engaged, and I was right. The manager came to her the next day and offered the agreement for her signature. She was quite alarmed and sent for me. I called at her house and, finding the manager there, asked him what security he could give for the fulfilment of his part of the engagement.

He answered by naming M. Martin, a banker of my acquaintance, who would be his surety. I could make no objection to this and the agreement was made out in duplicate in good form.

On leaving Agatha, I went to M. Raiberti and told him the story. He shared my astonishment that M. Martin should become surety for the manager, whom he knew and whose financial position was by no means good; but the next day the problem was solved, for, in spite of the secrecy that had been observed, we found out that it was Lord Percy who was behind the manager. I might still bar the Englishman's way by continuing to keep Agatha, in spite of his five hundred sequins, but I was obliged to return to France after Easter to wait on Madame d'Urfé and afterwards, peace having been concluded, I thought it would

be a good opportunity for seeing England. I therefore determined to abandon Agatha, taking care to bind her new lover to provide for her, and I proceeded to make a friend of the nobleman. I was curious to see how he would win Agatha's good graces, for she did not love him and physically he was not attractive.

In less than a week we had become intimate. We supped together every night at either his house or mine and Agatha and her mother were always of the party. I concluded that his attentions would soon touch Agatha's heart and that, finding herself so beloved, she would end by loving. This was enough to make me determine not to put any obstacles in their way and I resolved to leave Turin earlier than I had intended. In consequence I spoke as follows to Lord Percy, while we were breakfasting together

"My lord, you know that I love Agatha and that she loves me; nevertheless, I am your friend and, since you adore her, I will do my best to hasten your bliss. I will leave you in possession of this treasure, but you must promise that, when you abandon her, you will give her two thousand guineas."

"My dear sir," said he, "I will give them to her now if you like."

"No, my lord, I do not wish her to know anything about our agreement while you are living happily together."

"Then I will give you a bond binding myself to pay her two thousand guineas when we separate."

"I don't want that; the word of an Englishman is enough; but, since we cannot command the Fates and may die without having time to put our affairs in order, I wish you to take such steps as may seem appropriate to you whereby that sum would go to her after your death."

"I give you my word on it."

"That is enough, but I have one other condition to make."

"Say on"

"It is that you promise to say nothing to Agatha before my departure."

"I swear I will not."

"Very good; and on my part I promise to prepare her for the change."

The same day the Englishman, whose love grew hotter and hotter, made Agatha and her mother rich presents, which under any other circumstances I should not have allowed them to accept.

I lost no time in preparing Agatha and her mother for the impending change. They seemed affected, but I knew they would soon get reconciled to the situation. Far from giving me any cause for complaint, Agatha was more affectionate than ever. She listened attentively to my advice as to her conduct towards her new lover and the world in general, and promised to follow it. It was to this advice that she owed her happiness, for Lord Percy made her fortune. However, she did not leave the theatre for some years, when we shall hear more of her.

I was not the man to take presents from my equals and Lord Percy, no doubt being aware of that, succeeded in making me a handsome present in a very singular way. I told him that I thought of paying a visit to England and requested him to give me a letter of introduction to the duchess, his mother, whereon he drew out a portrait of her set with magnificent diamonds and gave it to me, saying:

"This is the best letter I can give you. I will write and tell her that you will call and give her the portrait, unless, indeed, she likes to leave it in your hands."

"Milady shall see, milord," I said, "that I aspire to be worthy of so flattering a favour."

There are certain ideas, it seems to me, which enter no head but an Englishman's.

I was invited by Count A— B— to Milan and the countess wrote me a charming letter, begging me to get her two pieces of saracenet, of which she enclosed the patterns.

After taking leave of all my friends and acquaintances, I got a letter of credit on the banker Greppi and started for the capital of Lombardy.

My separation from Agatha cost me many tears, but not so many as those shed by her. Her mother wept also, for she loved me and was grateful for all my kindness to her daughter. She said again and again that she could never have borne any rival but her own daughter, while the latter sobbed out that she wished she had not to part from me.

I did not like Passano, so I sent him to his family in Genoa, giving him the wherewithal to live till I came for him. As to my man, I dismissed him for good reasons and took another, as I was obliged to have somebody; but since I lost my Spaniard, I have never felt confidence in any of my servants.

I travelled with a Chevalier de Rossignan, whose acquaintance I had made, and we went by Casal to see the opera bouffe there.

Rossignan was a fine man, a good soldier, fond of wine and women, and, though he was not learned, he knew the whole of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by heart. This was his hobby and he was always quoting it, making the passage square with his momentary feelings. This made him insufferable in society, but he was an amusing companion for anyone who knew the sublime poet and could appreciate his numerous rare beauties. Nevertheless he made me privately give my assent to the proverb, "Beware of the man of one book." Otherwise he was intelligent, statesmanlike and good-natured. He made himself known in Berlin by his services as ambassador to the King of Sardinia.

There was nothing interesting in the opera at Casal, so I went to Pavia, where, though utterly unknown, I was immediately welcomed by the Marchioness Corti, who received all strangers of any importance. In 1786 I made the acquaintance of her son, an admirable man, who honoured me with his friendship and died quite young in Flanders with the rank of major-general. I wept bitterly for his loss, but tears, after all, are but an idle tribute to those who cause them to flow. His

good qualities had endeared him to all his acquaintances and, if he had lived longer, he would undoubtedly have risen to high command in the army.

I stopped only two days at Pavia, but it was decreed that I should get myself talked of even in that short time.

At the second ballet at the opera an actress dressed in a tippet held out her cap to the boxes as if to beg an alms, while she was dancing a *pas de deux*. I was in the Marchioness Corti's box and, when the girl held out her cap to me, I was moved by feelings of ostentation and benevolence to draw forth my purse and drop it in. It contained about twenty ducats. The girl took it and thanked me with a smile and the pit applauded loudly. I asked the Marquis Belcredi, who was near me, if she had a lover.

"She has a penniless French officer, I believe," he replied. "There he is, in the pit."

I went back to my inn and was supping with M. Basili, a Modenese colonel, when the ballet girl, her mother and her younger sister came to thank me for my providential gift. "We are so poor," said the girl.

I had almost done supper and I asked them all to sup with me after the performance the next day. This offer was quite a disinterested one and it was accepted.

I was delighted to have made a woman happy at so little expense and without any ulterior purpose, and I was giving orders to the landlord for the supper when Clairmont, my man, told me that a French officer wanted to speak to me. I had him in and asked what I could do for him.

"There are three courses before you, M. Venetian," said he, "and you can take which you like. Either countermand this supper, invite me to come to it or come and measure swords with me now."

Clairmont, who was attending to the fire, did not give me time to reply but seized a burning brand and rushed on the officer, who thought it best to escape. Luckily for him the door of my room was open. He made such a noise running downstairs that the waiter came out and caught hold of him, thinking he had stolen something; but Clairmont, who was pursuing him with his firebrand, had him released.

This adventure became town talk directly. My servant, proud of his exploit and sure of my approval, came to tell me that I need not be afraid to go out, as the officer was only a braggart. He did not even draw his sword on the waiter who had caught hold of him, though the man had only a knife in his belt.

"At all events," he added, "I will go out with you."

I told him he had done well this time but that in future he must not interfere in my affairs.

"Sir," he replied, "your affairs of this kind are mine, too; I shall take care not to go beyond my duty."

With this speech, which I thought very sensible, though I did not tell him so, he took one of my pistols and saw to the priming, smiling at me significantly.

All good French servants are of the same stamp as Clairmont; they are devoted and intelligent, but they all think themselves cleverer than their masters, which indeed is often the case, and, when they are sure of it, they become the masters of their masters, tyrannise over them and give them marks of contempt which the foolish gentlemen endeavour to conceal. But, when the master knows how to make himself respected, the Clairmonts are excellent.

The landlord of my inn sent a report of the affair to the police and the French officer was banished from the town the same day. At dinner Colonel Basili asked to hear the story and said that no one but a French officer would think of attacking a man in his own room in such a foolish manner. I differed from him.

"The French are brave," I replied, "but generally they are perfectly polite and have wonderful tact. Wretchedness and love, joined to a false spirit of courage, make a fool of a man the world over."

At supper the ballet girl thanked me for ridding her of the poor devil, who (as she said) was always threatening to kill her and wearied her besides. Though she was not beautiful, there was something captivating about this girl. She was graceful, well mannered and intelligent, her mouth was well shaped and her eyes were large and expressive. I think I should have found her a good bargain, but, as I wanted to get away from Pavia and prided myself on having been good-natured without ulterior motive, I bade her farewell after supper, with many thanks for her kindness in coming. My politeness seemed rather to embarrass her, but she went away reiterating her gratitude.

Next day I dined at the celebrated Chartreuse and in the evening I reached Milan and alighted at the house of Count A— B—, who had not expected me till the following day.

The countess, of whom my fancy had made a perfect woman, disappointed me dreadfully. It is always so when passion gives reins to the imagination. The countess was certainly pretty, though too short, and I might still have loved her, in spite of my disappointment, but at our meeting she greeted me with a gravity that was not to my taste and which gave me a dislike for her.

After the usual compliments, I gave her the two pieces of sarcenet she had commissioned me to get. She thanked me, telling me that her confessor would reimburse me for my expenditure. The count then took me to my room and left me there till supper. It was nicely furnished, but I felt ill at ease and resolved to leave in a day or two if the countess remained immovable. Twenty-four hours was as much as I cared to give her.

We made a party of four at supper, the count talking all the time to draw me out and to hide his wife's sulkiness. I answered in the same gay strain, speaking to his wife, however, in the hope of rousing her. It was all lost labour. The little woman replied only with faint smiles which vanished almost as they came and monosyllabic answers of the briefest description, without taking her eyes off the dishes, which she declared tasteless; and it was to the priest, who was the fourth person

present, that she addressed her complaints, always speaking affably to him.

Although I liked the count very well, I could not help pronouncing his wife decidedly ungracious. I was looking at her to see if I could find any justification for her ill humour on her features, but as soon as she saw me she turned away in a very marked manner and began to speak about nothing to the priest. This conduct offended me and I laughed heartily at her contempt, or her designs on me, for, as she had not fascinated me at all, I was safe from her tyranny.

After supper the sarcenet was brought in, it was to be used for a dress with hoops, made after the extravagant fashion then prevailing.

The count was grieved to see her fall so short of the praises he had lavished on her, and came to my room with me, begging me to forgive her Spanish ways and saying that she would be very pleasant when she knew me better.

The count was poor, his house was small, his furniture shabby, and his footman's livery threadbare, instead of plate, he had china and one of the countess's maids was chief cook. He had no carriages or horses, not even a saddle horse of any kind. Clairmont gave me all this information and added that he had to sleep in a little kitchen and was to share his bed with the man who had waited at table.

I had only one room and, having three heavy trunks, found myself very uncomfortable and decided on seeking some other lodging more agreeable to my tastes.

The count came early in the morning to ask what I usually took for breakfast.

"My dear count," I replied, "I have enough fine Turin chocolate to go all round. Does the countess like it?"

"Very much, but she won't take it unless it is made by her woman."

"Here are six pounds; make her accept it and tell her that, if I hear anything about payment, I shall take it back."

"I am sure she will accept it and thank you, too. Shall I have your carriage housed?"

"I shall be extremely obliged to you and I shall be glad if you would get me a hired carriage and a guide for whom you can answer."

"It shall be done."

The count was going out when the priest who had supped with us the night before came in to make his bow. He was a man of forty, one of the tribe of domestic chaplains who are so common in Italy and who, in return for keeping the accounts of the house, live with its master and mistress. In the morning this priest said mass in a neighbouring church, for the rest of the day he either occupied himself with the cares of the house or was the lady's obedient servant.

As soon as we were alone, he begged me to say that he had paid me three hundred Milanese crowns for the sarcenet if the countess asked me about it.

"Dear, dear, abbé!" said I, laughing, "this sort of thing is not exactly proper in a man of your sacred profession. How can you advise

me to tell a lie? No, sir; if the countess asks me any such impertinent question, I shall tell her the truth."

"I am sure she will ask you and, if you answer like that, I shall suffer for it."

"Well, sir, if you are in the wrong, you deserve to suffer."

"But as it happens, I am to blame for nothing."

"Well, go and tell her it's a present; and, if she won't have that, tell her I am in no hurry to be paid."

"I see, sir, that you don't know the lady or the way in which this house is managed. I will speak to her husband."

In a quarter of an hour the count told me that he owed me a lot of money, which he hoped to pay back in the course of Lent and that I must add the sarcenet to the account. I embraced him and said that he would have to keep the account himself, as I never noted down any of the moneys that I was only too happy to lend to my friends.

"If your wife asks me whether I have received the money, be sure I will answer in the affirmative."

He went out shedding grateful tears, while I felt indebted to him for having given me the opportunity of doing him a service, for I was very fond of him.

In the morning, the countess not being visible, I watched my man spreading out my suits over the chairs, amongst them being some handsome women's cloaks and a rich red dress deeply trimmed with fur, which had been originally intended for the luckless Corticelli. I should no doubt have given it to Agatha if I had continued to live with her, and I should have made a mistake, as such a dress was fit only for a lady of rank.

At one o'clock I received another visit from the count, who told me that the countess was going to introduce me to their best friend. This was the Marquis Triulzi, a man of about my own age, tall, well made, squinting slightly and with all the manner of a nobleman. He told me that, besides coming to have the honour of my acquaintance, he also came to enjoy the fire, "for," said he, "there's only one fire-place in the house and it's in your room."

As all the chairs were covered with clothes, the marquis drew the countess on to his knee and made her sit there like a baby, but she blushed and escaped from his grasp. The marquis laughed heartily at her embarrassment and she said, "Is it possible that a man of your years has not yet learnt to respect a woman?"

"Really, countess," said he, "I thought it would be very disrespectful to continue sitting while you were standing."

While Clairmont was taking the clothes off the chairs, the marquis noticed the mantles and the beautiful dress and asked me if I were expecting a lady.

"No," said I, "but I hope to find someone in Milan who will be worthy of such presents." I added, "I know the Prince Triulzi, in Venice; I suppose he is of your family?"

"He says he is and it may be so; but I am certainly not a member of his family."

This showed me that I should do well to say no more about the prince.

"You must stay to dinner, marquis," said Count A— B—, "and, as you like only dishes prepared by your own cook, you had better send for them."

The marquis agreed and we made good cheer. The table was covered with fair linen and handsome plate, the wine was good and plentiful and the servants quick and well dressed. I could now understand the marquis's position in the house. It was his wit and mirth which kept the conversation going and the countess came in for a share of his pleasantries, while she scolded him for his familiarity. I could see, however, that the marquis did not want to humiliate her; on the contrary, he was fond of her and only wished to bring down her exaggerated pride. When he saw her on the point of bursting into tears of rage and shame, he quieted her down by saying that no one in Milan respected her charms and her high birth more than he.

After dinner the tailor who was to measure the countess for a domino for the ball was announced. On the marquis's praising the colours and the beauty of the materials, she told him that I had brought her the sarcenet from Turin, and this reminded her to ask me whether I had been paid.

"Your husband settled with me," said I, "but you have given me a lesson I can never forget."

"What lesson?" said the marquis.

"I had hoped that the countess would deign to receive this poor present at my hands."

"And she wouldn't take it? It's absurd, on my life."

"There is nothing to laugh at," said the countess, "but you laugh at everything."

While the man was measuring her, she complained of feeling cold, as she was in her stays and her beautiful bosom was exposed. Thereupon, the marquis put his hands there, as if he were quite accustomed to practice such familiarities. But the Spanish countess, no doubt ashamed because of my presence, got into a rage and abused him in the most awful manner, while he laughed pleasantly, as if he could calm the storm when he pleased. This was enough to inform me of the position in which they stood to one another and of the part I ought to take.

We remained together till evening, when the countess and the marquis went to the opera and the count came with me to my room till my carriage was ready to take us there too. The opera had begun when we got in, and the first person I noticed on the stage was my dear Thérèse Palesi, whom I had left in Florence. It was a pleasant surprise to me and I foresaw that we should renew our sweet interviews while I remained in Milan. I was discreet enough to say nothing to the count about his wife's charms or the way their house was managed.

I saw that the place was taken, and the odd humours of the lady prevented my falling in love with her. After the second act we went to the assembly rooms, where five or six banks at faro were being held; I staked and lost a hundred ducats, as if to pay for my welcome, and then rose from the table.

At supper the countess seemed to unbend a little, she consoled with me on my loss and I said I was glad of it as it made her speak so.

Just as I rang my bell the next morning, Clairmont told me a woman wanted to speak to me.

"Is she young?"

"Both young and pretty, sir."

"That will do nicely; show her in."

I saw a simply dressed girl, who reminded me of Leah. She was tall and beautiful but had not as high pretensions as the Jewess, as she only wanted to know whether she could do my washing for me. I was quite taken with her. Clairmont had just brought me my chocolate and I asked her to sit down on the bed, but she answered modestly that she did not want to trouble me and would come again when I was up.

"Do you live at any distance?"

"I live on the ground floor of this house."

"All by yourself?"

"No, sir, I have my father and mother."

"And what is your name?"

"Zenobia."

"Your name is as pretty as you are. Will you give me your hand to kiss?"

"I can't," she replied, with a smile. "My hand is another's."

"You are engaged, are you?"

"Yes, to a tailor and we are going to be married before the end of the carnival."

"Is he rich or handsome?"

"Neither the one nor the other."

"Then why are you going to marry him?"

"Because I want to have a home of my own."

"I like you and offer you my friendship. Go and fetch me your tailor. I will give him some work."

As soon as she had gone out, I got up and told Clairmont to put my linen on a table. I had scarcely finished dressing when the girl came back with her tailor. It was a striking contrast, for he was a little shrivelled-up man, whose appearance made one laugh.

"Well, master tailor," said I, "so you are going to marry this charming girl?"

"Yes, sir, the banns have been published already."

"You are a lucky fellow, indeed, to have so much happiness in store. When are you going to marry her?"

"In ten or twelve days."

"Why not to-morrow?"

"Your Worship is in a great hurry."

"I think I should be, indeed," said I, laughing, "if I were in your place. I want you to make me a domino for the ball to-morrow."

"Certainly, sir; but Your Excellency must find me the stuff, for nobody in Milan would give me credit for it and I couldn't afford to lay out so much money in advance."

"When you are married, you will have money and credit, too. In the meanwhile here are ten sequins for you."

He went away in high glee at such a windfall.

I gave Zenobia some lace to do up and asked her if she was afraid of having a jealous husband.

"He is neither jealous nor amorous," she replied. "He is marrying me only because I earn more than he does."

"With your charms I should have thought you might have made a better match."

"I have waited long enough; I am quite tired of maidenhood. Besides, he is clever, even if he is not handsome, and perhaps a good head is better than a fair face."

"You are sharp enough yourself, anyhow. But why does he put off the wedding?"

"Because he hasn't any money and wants to have a fine wedding for his relatives to come to. I should like it myself."

"I think you are right, but I can't see why you should not let an honourable man kiss your hand."

"That was only a piece of slyness to let you know I was to be married. I have no silly prejudices myself."

"Ah, that's better! Tell your future husband that, if he is willing I should be the patron of the wedding, I will pay for everything"

"Really."

"Yes, really. I will give him twenty-five sequins on condition that he spends it all on the wedding."

"Twenty-five sequins! That will make people talk, but what care we? I will give you an answer to-morrow"

"And a kiss now?"

"With all my heart."

Zenobia went away in great delight and I went out to call on my banker and my dear Thérèse.

When the door was opened, the pretty maid recognised me and, taking me by the hand, led me to her mistress, who was just going to get up. Her emotion at seeing me was so great that she could not utter a word but only clasp me to her breast.

Our natural transports over, Thérèse told me that she had got tired of her husband and for the last six months they had not been living together. She had made him an allowance to get rid of him and he lived on it at Rome.

"And where is Cesarino?"

"In this town. You can see him whenever you like."

"Are you happy?"

"Quite. People say that I have a lover, but it is not true and you can see me at any time with perfect liberty."

We spent two pleasant hours telling each other of our experiences since our last meeting and then, finding her as fresh and fair as in the season of our early loves, I asked her if she had vowed to be faithful to her husband.

"In Florence," she replied, "I was still in love with him; but now, if I am still pleasing in your eyes, we can renew our ties and live together till we die."

"I will soon show you, darling, that I love you as well as ever."

She answered only by giving herself up to my embrace.

After that I left her as amorous as I had been eighteen years before, but my affections found too many new objects to remain constant long.

Countess A— B— began to be more polite.

"I know where you have been," said she, with a pleased air, "but, if you love that person, you will not go to see her again or her lover will leave her."

"Then I would take his place, madame."

"You are right in amusing yourself with women who know how to earn your presents. I am aware that you never give anything till you have received evident proofs of their affection."

"That has always been my principle."

"It's an excellent way to avoid being duped. The lover of the person you have been with kept a society lady for some time in great splendour, but all the rest of us despised her."

"Why so, if you please?"

"Because she lowered herself so terribly. Greppi is absolutely a man of no family whatever."

Without expressing my surprise at the name of Greppi, I replied that a man need not be well born to be an excellent lover.

"The only thing needful," said I, "is a fine physique and plenty of money, and those ladies who despised their friend were either ridiculously proud or abominably envious. I have not the slightest doubt that, if they could find other Greppis, they would be willing enough to lower themselves."

She would doubtless have made a sharp reply, for what I had said had angered her, but, the Marquis Triulzi arriving, she went out with him, while her husband and myself went to a place where there was a bank at faro, the banker having only a hundred sequins before him. I took a card and staked small sums like the rest of the company. After losing twenty ducats, I left the place.

As we were going to the opera, the poor count told me I had caused him to lose ten ducats on his word of honour and he did not know how he could pay it by the next day. I pitied him and gave him the money without a word; for misery has always appealed strongly to me. Afterwards I lost two hundred ducats at the same bank to which I had lost the evening before. The count was in the greatest distress. He did not know that Greppi, whom his proud wife considered so worthless, had

a hundred thousand francs of my money and that I possessed jewellery to an even greater amount.

The countess, who had seen me lose, asked if I would sell my beautiful dress.

"They say it's worth a thousand sequins," said she.

"Yes, that is so; but I would sell everything I possess before parting with any of the articles which I intend for the fair sex."

"Marquis Triulzi wants it badly to present to someone."

"I am very sorry, but I cannot sell it to him."

She went away without a word, but I could see that she was exceedingly vexed at my refusal.

As I was leaving the opera house, I saw Thérèse getting into her sedan-chair. I went up to her and told her that I was sure she was going to sup with her lover. She whispered in my ear that she was going to sup by herself and that I might come if I dared. I gave her an agreeable surprise by accepting the invitation.

"I will expect you, then," she said.

I asked the count to ride home in my carriage and, taking a chair, I reached Thérèse's house just as she was going in.

What a happy evening we had! We laughed heartily when we told each other our thoughts.

"I knew you were in love with Countess A— B—," said she, "and I felt sure you would not dare to come to supper with me."

"And I thought I should confound you by accepting your invitation, as I knew Greppi was your lover."

"He is my friend," she replied. "If he loves me in any other way than that of friendship, I pity him, for as yet he has not discovered the secret of seduction."

"Do you think he ever will?"

"No, I don't. I am rich."

"Yes, but he is richer than you."

"I know that, but I think he loves his money better than he loves me."

"I understand You will make him happy if he loves you well enough to ruin himself."

"That is it, but it will never come to pass. But here we are, together again after a divorce of nearly twenty years. I don't think you will find any change in me."

"That is a privilege which nature grants to the fair sex only. You will find me changed, but you will be able to work miracles."

This was a piece of politeness, for she was hardly capable of working any miracle. However, after an excellent supper, we spent two hours in amorous raptures and then Morpheus claimed us for his own. When we awoke, I did not leave her before giving her a "good day" equal to the "good night" which had sent us to sleep.

When I got back, I found the fair Zenobia, who said the tailor was ready to marry her the next Sunday if my offer was not a joke.

"To convince you of my sincerity," said I, "here are the twenty-five sequins."

Full of gratitude, she fell into my arms and I covered her mouth and her beautiful bosom with my fiery kisses. Thérèse had exhausted me, so I did not go any further, but the girl no doubt attributed my self-restraint to the fact that my door was not locked. I dressed carefully and made myself look less weary and, to freshen myself, I took a long drive in an open carriage.

When I returned I found the Marquis Triulzi teasing the countess as usual. On that day he furnished the dinner and it was consequently a very good one.

The conversation turned on the dress in my possession and the countess, like an idiot, told the marquis it was destined for the lady who should make me desirous and gratify my desire.

With exquisite politeness the marquis told me I deserved to enjoy favours at a cheaper rate.

"I suppose you will be giving it to the person with whom you spent last night," said the countess.

"That's an impossibility," I answered, "for I spent the night at gambling."

Just then Clairmont came in and told me an officer wanted to speak to me. I went to the door and saw a handsome young fellow, who greeted me with an embrace. I recognised him as Barbaro, the son of a Venetian noble and brother of the fair and famous Madame Gritti Sgombro, of whom I spoke ten years back, whose husband died in the citadel of Cattaro, where the State Inquisitors had imprisoned him. My young friend had also fallen into disfavour with the despotic Inquisitors. We had been good friends during the year before my imprisonment, but I had heard nothing of him since.

Barbaro told me the chief incidents in a life that had been adventurous enough, and informed me that he was now in the service of the Duke of Modena, the governor of Milan.

"I saw you losing money at Canano's bank," said he, "and, remembering our old friendship, I want to communicate to you a sure way of winning money. All that is necessary is for me to introduce you to a club of young men who are very fond of play and cannot possibly win."

"Where does this club meet?"

"In an extremely respectable house. If you agree, I will keep the bank myself and I am sure of winning. I want you to lend me capital and I ask only a fourth of the profits."

"I suppose you can hold the cards well."

"You are right."

This was as much as to tell me that he was an adroit sharper or, in other words, a skilful corrector of Fortune's mistakes. He concluded by saying that I should find something worth looking at in the house he had mentioned.

"My dear sir," I replied, "I will give you my decision after seeing the club to which you want to introduce me."

"Will you be at the theatre coffee-house at three o'clock to-morrow?"

"Yes, but I hope to see you at the ball this evening."

Zenobia's betrothed brought me my domino and the countess already had hers. As the ball did not begin till the opera was over, I went to hear Thérèse's singing. In the interval between the acts I lost another two hundred sequins and then went home to dress for the ball. The countess said that, if I would be kind enough to take her to the ball in my carriage and fetch her home in it, she would not send for the Marquis Triulzi's. I replied that I was at her service.

Under the impression that the fair Spaniard had given me the preference only to enable me to take liberties with her, I told her I should be very glad to give her the dress and that the only condition was that I should spend a night with her.

"You insult me cruelly," said she. "You must know my character better than that."

"I know everything, my dear countess; but, after all, the insult's nothing; you can easily forgive me if you pluck up a little spirit, trample on a foolish prejudice, get the dress and make me happy for a whole night long."

"That is all very well when one is in love, but you must confess that your coarse way of speaking is more likely to make me hate you than love you."

"I use that style because I want to come to the point; I have no time to waste. And you, countess, must confess in your turn that you would be delighted to have me sighing at your feet."

"It would be all the same to me; I don't think I could love you."

"Then we are agreed on one point at all events, for I love you no more than you love me."

"And yet you would spend a thousand sequins for the pleasure of passing a night with me."

"Not at all; I don't want to sleep with you for the sake of the pleasure, but to mortify your infernal pride, which becomes you so ill."

God knows what the fierce Spanish woman would have answered, but at that moment the carriage stopped at the door of the theatre. We parted and, after I had got tired of threading my way amidst the crowd, I paid a visit to the gaming-room, hoping to regain the money I had lost. I had more than five hundred sequins about me and a good credit at the bank, but I certainly did my best to lose everything I had. I sat down at Canano's bank and, noticing that the poor count, who followed me wherever I went, was the only person who knew me, I thought I should have a lucky evening. I punted on only one card and spent four hours without losing or gaining. Towards the end, wishing to force Fortune's favour, I lost rapidly and left all my money in the hands of the banker. I went back to the ballroom, where the countess rejoined me and we returned home.

When we were in the carriage, she said:

"You lost an immense sum, and I am very glad of it. The marquis will give you a thousand sequins for that dress and the money will bring you luck."

"And to you, too, for I suppose you will get the dress?"

"Maybe."

"No, madame, you shall never get it in that way and you know the other. I despise a thousand sequins."

"And I despise you and your presents."

"You may despise me as much as you please and you may be sure I return the compliment."

With these polite expressions we reached the house. When I got to my room, I found the count there with a long face, as if he wanted to pity me but dared not do it. However, my good temper gave him the courage to say, "Triulzi will give you a thousand sequins; that will set you up again."

"For the dress, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I would rather give it to your wife, but she said she would despise it, coming from my hands."

"You astonish me; she is mad after it. You must have wounded her haughty temper in some way or another. But sell it and get the thousand sequins."

"I will let you know to-morrow."

I slept four or five hours and then rose and went out in my great-coat to call on Greppi, for I had no more money. I drew a thousand sequins, begging him not to tell my affairs to anyone. He replied that my affairs were his own and I could count on his secrecy. He complimented me on the esteem in which Madame Palesi held me, and said he hoped to meet me at supper at her house one night.

"Such a meeting would give me the greatest pleasure," I replied.

On leaving him, I called on Thérèse but, as there were some people with her, I did not stay long. I was glad to see that she knew nothing about my losses or my affairs. She said that Greppi wanted to sup with me at her house and she would let me know when the day was fixed. When I got home, I found the count in front of my fire.

"My wife is in a furious rage with you," said he, "and won't tell me why."

"The reason is, my dear count, that I won't let her accept the dress from any hand but mine. She told me that she would despise it as a gift from me, but she has nothing to be furious about, that I know."

"It's some mad notion of hers and I don't know what to make of it. But pray attend to what I am about to say to you. You despise a thousand sequins—good! I congratulate you. But, if you are in a position to despise a sum which would make me happy, offer up a foolish vanity on the shrine of friendship, take the thousand sequins and lend them to me and let my wife have the dress, for of course he will give it to her."

This proposal made me roar with laughter and certainly it was of

a nature to excite the hilarity even of a sufferer from confirmed melancholia, which I was far from being. However, I stopped laughing when I saw how the poor count blushed for shame. I kissed him affectionately to calm him, but at last I was cruel enough to say:

"I will willingly assist you in this arrangement. I will sell the dress to the marquis as soon as you please, but I won't lend you the money. I'll give it to you in the person of your wife at a private interview; but, when she receives me, she must be not only polite and complaisant, but as gentle as a lamb. Go and see if it can be arranged, my dear count; 'tis absolutely my last word."

"I will see," said the poor husband, and with that he went out.

Barbaro kept his appointment with exactitude. I had him get into my carriage and we alighted at a house on the outskirts of Milan. We went to the first floor, where I was introduced to a fine-looking old man, an amiable lady of pleasing appearance and two charming cousins. He introduced me as a Venetian gentleman in disfavour with the State Inquisitors, like himself, adding that, as I was a rich bachelor, their good or ill favour made no difference to me.

He said I was rich and I looked it! My luxury of attire was dazzling. My rings, my snuffboxes, my chains, my diamonds, my jewelled cross hanging on my breast—all gave me the air of an important personage. The cross belonged to the Order of the Spur the Pope had given me but, as I had carefully taken the spur away, it was not known to what order I belonged. Those who might be curious did not dare to ask me, for one can no more inquire of a knight what order he belongs to than one can say to a lady, "How old are you?" I wore it till 1785, when the Prince Palatine of Russia told me in private that I would do well to get rid of the thing.

"It only serves to dazzle fools," said he, "and here you have none such to deal with."

I followed his advice, for he was a man of profound intelligence. Nevertheless, he removed the corner stone of the kingdom of Poland. He ruined it by the same means by which he had made it greater.

The old man to whom Barbaro presented me was a marquis. He told me that he knew Venice and, as I was not a patrician, I could live as pleasantly anywhere else. He told me to consider his house and all he possessed as mine.

The two young marchionesses had enchanted me; they were almost ideal beauties. I longed to inquire about them of some good authority, for I did not put much faith in Barbaro.

In half an hour the visitors commenced to come on foot and in carriages. Among the arrivals were several pretty and well-dressed girls and numerous smart young men, all vying with each other in their eagerness to pay court to the two cousins. There were twenty of us in all. We sat round a large table and began to play a game called "bankruptcy." After amusing myself for a couple of hours in losing sequins, I went out with Barbaro to the opera.

"The two young ladies are angels incarnate," I said to my country-

man. "I shall pay my respects to them and find out in a few days whether they are for me. As for the gaming speculation, I will lend you two hundred sequins; but I don't want to lose the money, so you must give me good security."

"To that I agree willingly, but I am certain of giving it back to you with good interest."

"You shall have a half share and not twenty-five per cent, and I must strongly insist that nobody shall know of my having anything to do with your bank. If I hear any rumours, I shall bet heavily on my own account."

"You may be sure I shall keep the secret; it is to my own interest to have it believed that I am my own capitalist."

"Very good. Come to me early to-morrow morning, bring me good security and you shall have the money."

He embraced me in the joy of his heart.

The picture of the two fair ladies was still in my brain and I was thinking of inquiring of Greppi when I chanced to see Triulzi in the pit of the opera house. He saw me at the same moment and came up to me, saying gaily that he was sure I had had a bad dinner, and that I had much better dine with him every day.

"You make me blush, marquis, for not having called on you yet."

"No, no; there can be nothing of that kind between men of the world who know the world's worth."

"We are agreed there, at all events."

"By the way, I hear you have decided on selling me that handsome dress of yours. I am really very much obliged to you and will give you the fifteen thousand livres whenever you like."

"You can come and get it to-morrow morning."

He then proceeded to tell me about the various ladies I noticed in the theatre. Seizing the opportunity, I said:

"When I was in church the other day, I saw two exquisite beauties. A man at my side told me they were cousins, the Marchionesses Q— and F—, I think he said. Do you know them? I am quite curious to hear about them."

"I know them. As you say, they are charming. It's not very difficult to obtain access to them and I suppose they are good girls, as I have not heard their names in connection with any scandal. However, I know that Mlle. F— has a lover, but it is a great secret; he is the only son of one of the noblest of our families. Unfortunately, they are not rich; but, if they are clever, as I am sure they are, they may make good matches. If you like, I can get someone to introduce you there."

"I haven't made up my mind yet. I may be able to forget them easily, having seen them only once. Nevertheless, I am infinitely obliged to you for your kind offer."

After the ballet I went into the assembly room and I heard "There he is!" several times repeated as I came in. The banker made me a bow and offered me a place next to him. I sat down and he handed

me a pack of cards, I punted and with such inveterate bad luck that in less than an hour I lost seven hundred sequins. I should probably have lost all the money I had in my pocket if Canano had not been obliged to go away. He gave the cards to a man whose looks displeased me and I rose and went home and got into bed directly, so as not to be obliged to conceal my ill temper.

In the morning Barbaro came to claim the two hundred sequins. He gave me the right to sequester his pay by way of surety. I do not think I should have had the heart to exercise my rights if things had gone wrong, but I liked to have some control over him. When I went out, I called on Greppi and drew two thousand sequins in gold.

CHAPTER 95

ON my return I found the count with one of the marquis's servants, who gave me a note begging me to send the dress, which I did directly.

"The marquis will dine with us," said the count, "and no doubt he will bring the money with him for this treasure."

"You think it a treasure, then?"

"Yes, fit for a queen to wear."

"I wish the treasure had the virtue of giving you a crown; one head-dress is as good as another."

The poor devil understood the allusion and, as I liked him, I reproached myself for having humiliated him unintentionally, but I could not resist the temptation to jest. I hastened to smooth his brow by saying that, as soon as I got the money for the dress, I would take it to the countess.

"I have spoken to her about it," said he, "and your proposal made her laugh; but I am sure she will make up her mind when she finds herself in possession of the dress."

It was a Friday. The marquis sent in an excellent fish dinner and came himself soon after, with the dress in a basket. The present was made with all ceremony and the proud countess was profuse in her expressions of thanks, which the giver received coolly enough, as if accustomed to that kind of thing. However, he ended by the no means flattering remark that, if she had any sense, she would sell it, as everybody knew she was too poor to wear it. This suggestion by no means met with her approval. She abused him to her heart's content and told him he must be a great fool to give her a dress which he considered unsuitable to her.

They were disputing warmly when the Marchioness Menafoglio was announced. As soon as she came in, her eyes were attracted by the dress, which was stretched over a chair, and, finding it superb, she exclaimed, "I would gladly buy that dress."

"I did not buy it to sell again," said the countess, sharply.

"Excuse me," replied the marchioness, "I thought it was for sale, and I am sorry it is not."

The marquis, who was no lover of dissimulation, began to laugh and the countess, fearing he would cover her with ridicule, hastened to change the conversation. But, when the marchioness was gone, the countess gave rein to her passion and scolded the marquis bitterly for having laughed. However, he only replied by remarks which, though exquisitely polite, had a sting in them, and at last the lady said she was tired and was going to lie down.

When she had left the room, the marquis gave me the fifteen thousand francs, telling me they would bring me good luck at Canano's.

"You are a great favourite with Canano," he added, "and he wants you to come and dine with him. He can't ask you to supper, as he is obliged to spend his nights in the assembly rooms."

"Tell him I will come any day he likes except the day after tomorrow, when I have to go to a wedding at the Apple Garden."

"I congratulate you," said the count and the marquis together. "It will no doubt be very pleasant."

"I expect to enjoy myself heartily there," I replied.

"Could we not come, too?"

"Do you really want to?"

"Certainly."

"Then I will get you an invitation from the fair bride herself on condition that the countess comes as well. I must warn you that the company will consist of honest people of the lower classes and I cannot have them humiliated in any way."

"I will persuade the countess," said Triulzi.

"To make your task an easier one, I may as well tell you that the wedding is that of the fair Zenobia."

"Bravo! I am sure the countess will come to that."

The count went out and shortly reappeared with Zenobia. The marquis congratulated her and encouraged her to ask the countess to the wedding. She seemed doubtful, so the marquis took her by the hand and led her into the proud Spaniard's room. In half an hour they returned informing us that milady had deigned to accept the invitation.

When the marquis had gone, the count told me that I might go and keep his wife company if I had nothing better to do, and that he would see to some business.

"I have the thousand sequins in my pocket," I remarked, "and, if I find her reasonable, I will leave them with her."

"I will go and speak to her first."

"Do so."

While the count was out of the room, I exchanged the thousand sequins for the fifteen thousand francs in bank notes which Greppi had given me.

I was just shutting up my cashbox when Zenobia came in with my lace cuffs. She asked me if I would like to buy a piece of lace. I replied in the affirmative and she went out and brought it to me.

I liked the lace and bought it for eighteen sequins.

I softly entered the countess's room and, finding her in bed, inquired affectionately after her health.

"I am very well," said she, smiling agreeably. "My husband has brought me back to health."

I had seated myself quietly on the bed and she had shown no vexation—certainly a good omen.

"Aren't you going out any more to-day?" said she. "You have your dressing-gown on."

"I fell asleep lying on my bed and, when I awoke, I decided on keeping you company if you will be as good and gentle as you are pretty."

"If you behave well to me, you will always find me so."

"And will you love me?"

"That depends on you. So you are going to sacrifice Canano to me this evening."

"Yes, and with the greatest pleasure. He has won a lot from me already and I foresee that he will win the fifteen thousand francs I have in my pocket to-morrow. This is the money the Marquis Triulzi gave me for the dress."

"It will be a pity to lose such a large sum."

"You are right and I need not lose them if you will be complaisant, for they are meant for you. Allow me to shut the door."

"What for?"

"Because I am perishing with cold and desire and intend warming myself in your bed."

"I will never allow that."

"I have no desire to force you. Goodbye, countess, I will go and warm myself by my own fire and to-morrow I will wage war on Canano's bank."

"You are certainly a mean man. Stay here, I like your conversation."

Early the next day the count came into my room with a very pleased expression.

"My wife is very well," said he, "and told me to wish you good day." I did not expect this and I no doubt looked somewhat astonished.

"I am glad," he said, "that you gave her francs instead of the sequins you got from Triulzi and I hope, as Triulzi said, you will have luck with them at the bank."

"I am not going to the opera," said I, "but to the masked ball and I don't want anyone to recognise me."

I begged him to go and buy me a new domino and not to come near me in the evening, so that none but he should know who I was. As soon as he had gone out, I began to write letters. I had heavy arrears to make up in that direction.

The count brought me my domino at noon and, after hiding it, we went to dine with the countess. Her affability, politeness and gentleness astounded me. She looked so sweetly pretty that I repented having outraged her so scandalously. Her insensibility of the evening before seemed inconceivable and I began to suspect that the signs I had no-

ticed to the contrary were due only to the animal faculties, which are especially active in sleep.

"Was she really asleep," said I to myself, "when I was outraging her so shamefully?"

I hoped it had been so. When her husband left us alone, I said, humbly and tenderly, that I knew I was a monster and that she must detest me.

"You a monster?" she said. "On the contrary, I owe much to you and there is nothing I can think of for which I have cause to reproach you."

I took her hand tenderly and would have carried it to my lips, but she drew it away gently and gave me a kiss. My repentance brought a deep blush to my face.

When I got back to my room, I sealed my letters and went to the ball. I was absolutely unrecognisable. Nobody had ever seen my watches or my snuffboxes before and I had even changed my purses, for fear of somebody recognising me by them.

Thus armed against the glances of the curious, I sat down at Canano's table and commenced to play in quite a different fashion. I had a hundred Spanish pieces in my pocket, worth seven hundred Venetian sequins I had got this Spanish money from Greppi and I took care not to use what Triulzi had given me, for fear he should know me.

I emptied my purse on the table and in less than an hour it was all gone. I rose from the table and everybody thought I was going to beat a retreat, but I took out another purse and put a hundred sequins on one card, going second, with *paroli*, seven, and the *va*. The stroke was successful and Canano gave me back my hundred Spanish pieces, on which I sat down again by the banker and recommenced regular play. Canano was looking at me hard. My snuffbox was the one which the Elector of Cologne had given me, with the prince's portrait on the lid. I took a pinch of snuff and he gave me to understand that he would like one, too, and the box was subjected to a general examination. A lady whom I did not know said the portrait represented the Elector of Cologne in his robes as Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. The box was returned to me and I saw that it had made me respected, so small a thing imposes on people I then put fifty sequins on one card, going *paroli* and *paix de paroli*, and at daybreak I had broken the bank. Canano said politely that, if I liked to be spared the trouble of carrying all that gold, he would have it weighed and give me a cheque. A pair of scales was brought and it was found that I had thirty-four pounds' weight in gold, amounting to two thousand eight hundred and fifty-six sequins Canano wrote me a cheque and I slowly returned to the ball-room.

Barbaro had recognised me with the keenness of a Venetian. He accosted me and congratulated me on my luck, but I gave him no answer and, seeing that I wished to remain incognito, he left me.

A lady in a Greek dress richly adorned with diamonds came up to

me and said in a falsetto voice that she would like to dance with me. I made a sign of assent and, as she took off her glove, I saw a finely-shaped hand as white as alabaster, one of the fingers bearing an exquisite diamond ring. It was evidently no ordinary person and, though I puzzled my head, I could not guess who she could be.

She danced admirably, in the style of a woman of fashion, and I, too, exerted myself to the utmost. By the time the dance was over, I was covered with perspiration.

"You look hot," said my partner, in her falsetto voice, "come and rest in my box."

My heart leaped with joy and I followed her with great delight; but, as I saw Greppi in the box to which she took me, I had no doubt that it must be Thérèse, which did not please me quite so well. And sure enough, Thérèse took off her mask and complimented me on my success.

"But how did you recognise me, dearest?"

"By your snuffbox. I knew it, otherwise I should never have found you out."

"Then you think nobody else has recognised me?"

"Nobody, unless in the same way as I did."

"None of the people here have seen my snuffbox."

I took the opportunity of handing Greppi Canano's cheque and he gave me a receipt for it. Thérèse asked us to supper for the ensuing evening and said, "There will be four of us in all."

Greppi seemed curious to know who the fourth person could be, but I rightly guessed it would be my dear son Cesarino.

As I went down once more to the ballroom, two pretty female dominos attacked me right and left, telling me that Messer-Grande was waiting for me outside. They then asked me for some snuff and I gave them a box ornamented with an indecent picture I had the impudence to touch the spring and show it to them and, after inspecting it, they exclaimed, "Fie, fie! Your punishment is never to know who we are."

I was sorry to have displeased the two fair masquers, who seemed worth knowing, so I followed them and, meeting Barbaro, who knew everybody, I pointed them out to him and heard to my delight that they were the two Marchionesses Q— and F—. I promised Barbaro to go and see them. He said that everybody in the ballroom knew me and that our bank was doing very well, though, of course, that was a trifle to me.

Towards the end of the ball, when it was already full daylight, a masquer dressed as a Venetian gondolier was accosted by a lady masquer, also in Venetian costume. She challenged the gondolier to prove himself a Venetian by dancing the *forlana* with her. The gondolier accepted and the music struck up, but the boatman, who was apparently a Milanese, was hooted, while the lady danced exquisitely. I was very fond of the dance and asked the unknown Venetian lady to dance it again with me. She agreed and a ring was formed around us and we were so applauded that we had to dance it over again. This

would have sufficed if a very pretty shepherdess without a mask had not begged me to dance it with her. I could not refuse her and she danced exquisitely, going round and round the circle three times and seeming to hover in the air. I was quite out of breath. When it was finished, she came up to me and whispered my name in my ear. I was astonished and, feeling the charm of the situation, demanded her name.

"You shall know," said she, in Venetian, "if you will come to The Three Kings."

"Are you alone?"

"No, my father and mother, who are old friends of yours, are with me."

"I will call on Monday."

What a number of adventures to have in one night! I went home wearily and went to bed, but I was allowed to sleep only two hours. I was roused and begged to dress The countess, the marquis and the count, all ready for Zenobia's wedding, teased me till I was ready, telling me it was not polite to keep a bride waiting. Then they all congratulated me on my breaking the bank and the run of luck against me. I told the marquis it was his money that had brought me luck, but he replied by saying that he knew what had become of his money.

This indiscretion on the count's part or the countess's surprised me greatly; it seemed to me contrary to all the principles of intrigue.

"Canano knew you," said the marquis, "by the way you opened your snuffbox, and he awaits us for dinner. He says he hopes you will win a hundred pounds' weight of gold; he has a fancy for you."

"Canano," said I, "has keen eyes and plays faro admirably. I have not the slightest wish to win his money from him."

We then started for the Apple Garden, where we found a score of honest folks and the bride and bridegroom, who overwhelmed us with compliments. We soon put the company at their ease. At first our presence overawed them, but a little familiarity soon restored the general hilarity. We sat down to dinner and among the guests were some very pretty girls, but my head was too full of Zenobia to care about them. The dinner lasted three hours. It was an abundant repast and the foreign wines were so exquisite that it was easy to see that the sum I had furnished had been exceeded. Good fellowship prevailed and, after the first bumper had passed round, everybody proposed somebody else's health and, as each tried to say something different to his neighbour, the most fearful nonsense prevailed. Then everybody thought himself bound to sing and they were not at all first-rate vocalists by any means. We laughed heartily and also caused laughter, for our speeches and songs were as bad as those of our humble friends. When we rose from the table, kissing became general and the countess could not resist laughing when she found herself obliged to present her cheek for the salute of the tailor, who thought her laughter a special mark of favour.

Strains of sweet music were heard and the ball was duly opened by the newly married couple. Zenobia danced, if not exactly well, at least

gracefully; but the tailor, who had never put his legs to any other use except crossing them, cut such a ridiculous figure that the countess had much ado to restrain her laughter. But, in spite of that, I led out Zenobia for the next minuet and the proud countess was obliged to dance with the wretched tailor.

When the minuets stopped, the square dances began and refreshments were liberally handed round. Confetti, a kind of sweetmeat even better than that made at Verdun, were very plentiful.

When we were just going, I congratulated the husband and offered to take Zenobia home in my carriage, which he was pleased to style a very honourable offer. I gave my hand to Zenobia and helped her into the carriage and, having told the coachman to go slowly, I put her on my lap and kept her there all the time. Zenobia was the first to get out and, noticing that my breeches of grey velvet were spoiled, I told her I would be with her in a few minutes. In two minutes I put on a pair of black satin breeches and rejoined the lady before her husband came in.

Before long the husband and his sister arrived. He thanked me, calling me his gossip, and then, noticing the change in my dress, he asked me how I had contrived to make the alteration so quickly.

"I went to my room, leaving your wife at your house, for which I beg your pardon."

"Didn't you see that the gentleman had spilt a cup of coffee over his handsome breeches?" said Zenobia.

"My dear wife," said the crafty tailor, "I don't see everything nor is it necessary that I should, but you should have accompanied the gentleman to his room."

Then turning to me with a laugh, he asked me how I had enjoyed the wedding.

"Immensely, and my friends did likewise; but you must let me pay you, dear gossip, for what you spent over and above the twenty-four sequins. You can tell me how much it is."

"Very little, a mere trifle, Zenobia shall bring you the bill."

I went home feeling vexed with myself for not having foreseen that the rogue would notice my change of dress and guess the reason. However, I consoled myself with the thought that the tailor was no fool and that it was plain he was content to play the part we had assigned him. So, after wishing good night to the count, the countess and the marquis, who all thanked me for the happy day they had spent, I went to bed.

As soon as I was awake, I thought of the shepherdess who had danced the *forlana* so well at the ball, and I resolved to pay her a visit. I was not more interested in her beauty than to find out who her father and mother, "old friends of mine," could be. I dressed and walked to The Three Kings and, on going into the room which the shepherdess had indicated to me, what was my astonishment to find myself face to face with the Countess Rinaldi, whom Zavoisky had introduced me to at the *locanda* of the Castelletto sixteen years before!

So saying, I gave her a kiss, which she took very kindly, but she smelt of nursing, which I detested, so I did not go any farther, despite her radiant beauty.

I made my bargain with the landlord and paid a month's rent in advance, for which he gave me a receipt. It was agreed that I should come and go as I pleased and that he would provide me with food. I gave him a name so common as to tell him nothing whatever about me, but he seemed to care very little about that.

As I had agreed with Barbaro to visit the fair marchionesses, I dressed carefully and after a slight repast with the countess, who was pleasant but did not quite please me, I met my fellow countryman and we called on the two cousins.

"I have come," said I, "to beg your pardons for having revealed to you the secret of the snuffbox."

They blushed and scolded Barbaro, thinking he had betrayed them. On examining them, I found them far superior to Irene, my present flame, but their manner, the respect they seemed to require, frightened me. I was not at all disposed to dance attendance on them. Irene, on the contrary, was an easy prey. I had only to do her parents a service and she was in my power, while the two cousins had their full share of aristocratic pride, which debases the nobility to the level of the vilest of the people and impresses none but fools, who after all are in the majority everywhere. Further, I was no longer at that dazzling age which fears nothing and I was afraid that my appearance would hardly overcome them. It is true that Barbaro had made me hope that presents would be of some use, but after what the Marquis Triulzi had said, I feared that Barbaro had only spoken on supposition.

When the company was sufficiently numerous, the card tables were brought in. I sat down by Mlle. Q— and disposed myself to play for small stakes. I was introduced by the aunt, the mistress of the house, to a young gentleman in Austrian uniform who sat beside me.

My dear countryman played like a true sharper, much to my displeasure. My fair neighbour at the end of the game, which lasted four hours, found herself the gainer of a few sequins, but the officer, who had played on his word of honour, after losing all the money in his pockets, owed ten louis. The bank was the winner of fifty sequins, including the officer's debt. As the young man lived at some distance, he honoured me by coming in my carriage.

On the way, Barbaro told us he would introduce us to a girl who had just come from Venice. The officer caught fire at this and begged that we go and see her directly and we accordingly went. The girl was rather good-looking, but neither I nor the officer cared much about her. While they were making some coffee for us and Barbaro was entertaining the young lady, I took a pack of cards and had not much difficulty in inducing the officer to risk twenty sequins against the twenty I put on the table. While we were playing, I spoke to him of the passion with which the young marchioness inspired me.

"She's my sister," said he.

I knew as much but pretended to be astonished and went on playing. Taking the opportunity, I told him that I knew of no one who could let the marchioness know of my affection better than he. I made him laugh and, as he thought I was jesting, he gave only vague answers; but, seeing that, while I talked of my passion, I forgot my cards, he soon won the twenty sequins from me and immediately paid them to Barbaro. In the excess of his joy he embraced me as if I had given him the money, and, when we parted, he promised to give me some good news of his sister at our next meeting.

I had to go to supper with Thérèse, Greppi and my son, but, having some spare time before me, I went to the opera house. The third act was going on and I accordingly visited the card-room and there lost two hundred sequins at a single deal. I left the room almost as if I were flying from an enemy. Canano shook me by the hand and told me he expected me and the marquis to dinner every day, and I promised we would come at the earliest opportunity.

I went to Thérèse's and found Greppi there before me. Thérèse and Don Cesarino, whom I covered with kisses, came in a quarter of an hour afterwards. The banker stared at him in speechless wonder. He could not make out whether he was my son or my brother. Seeing his amazement, Thérèse told him Cesarino was her brother. This stupefied the worthy man still more. At last he asked me if I had known Thérèse's mother pretty well and, on my answering in the affirmative, he seemed more at ease.

The meal was excellent, but all my attention went to my son. He had all the advantages of a good disposition and an excellent education. He had grown a great deal since I had seen him in Florence, and his mental powers had developed proportionately. His presence made the party grave but sweet. The innocence of youth throws around it an ineffable charm; it demands respect and restraint. An hour after midnight we left Thérèse and I went to bed, well pleased with my day's work, for the loss of two hundred sequins did not trouble me much.

When I got up, I received a note from Irene begging me to call on her. Her father had given her permission to go to the next ball with me and she had a domino, but she wanted to speak to me. I wrote and told her I would see her in the course of the day. I had written to tell the Marquis Triulzi that I was going to dine with Canano, and he replied that he would be there.

We found this skilled gamester in a fine house, richly furnished and showing traces on every side of the wealth and taste of its owner. Canano introduced me to two handsome women, one of whom was his mistress, and to five or six marquises; for in Milan no noble who is not a marquis is thought anything of, just as in the same way they are all counts in Vicenza. The dinner was magnificent and the conversation highly intellectual. In a mirthful moment Canano said he had known me for seventeen years, his acquaintance dating from the time I had juggled a professional gamester, calling himself Count Celi, out of a pretty ballet girl whom I had taken to Mantua. I confessed the deed

and amused the company by the story of what had happened in Mantua with Oreilan and how I had found Count Celi at Cesena metamorphosed into Count Alfani. Somebody mentioned the ball which was to be held the next day and, when I said I was not going, they laughed.

"I bet I will recognise you," said Canano, "if you come to the bank."

"I am not going to play any more," said I.

"All the better for me," answered Canano, "for, though your punting is unlucky, you don't leave off till you have won my money. But that's only my joke; try again, and I protest I would see you win half my fortune gladly."

Count Canano had a ring on his finger with a stone not unlike one of mine; it had cost him two thousand sequins, while mine was worth three thousand. He proposed that we should stake them against each other after having them unmounted and valued.

"When?" said I.

"Before going to the opera."

"Very good; but on two turns of the cards and a deal to each."

"No, I never punt."

"Then we must equalise the game."

"How do you mean?"

"By leaving doubles and the last two cards out of account."

"Then you would have the advantage."

"If you can prove that, I will pay you a hundred sequins. Indeed, I would bet anything you like that the game would still be to the advantage of the banker."

"Can you prove it?"

"Yes, and I will name the Marquis Triulzi as judge."

I was asked to prove my point without any question of a bet.

"The advantages of the banker," said I, "are two. The first and the smaller is that all he has to attend to is not to deal wrongly, which is a very small matter to an habitual player; and all the time the punter has to rack his brains on the chances of one card or another coming out. The other advantage is one of time. The banker draws his card at least a second before the punter and this again gives him an advantage."

No one replied; but after some thought the Marquis Triulzi said that, to make the chances perfectly equal, the players would have to be equal, which was almost out of the question.

"All that is too finespun for me," said Canano. "I don't understand it." But after all, there was not much to understand.

After dinner I went to The Three Kings to find out what Irene had to say to me and enjoy her society. When she saw me, she ran up to me, threw her arms around my neck and kissed me, but with too much eagerness for me to lay much value on the salute. However, I have always known that, if one wants to enjoy pleasure, one must not philosophise about it or one runs a risk of losing half the enjoyment. If Irene had caught my fancy while dancing the *forlana*, why might I not

have pleased her, in spite of my superiority in age? It was not impossible and that should be enough for me, as I did not intend to make her my wife.

The father and mother received me as their preserver, and they may have been sincere. The count begged me to come out of the room for a moment with him and, when we were on the other side of the door, he said, "Forgive an old and unfortunate man, forgive a father, if I ask you whether it is true that you promised Irene a hundred sequins if I would let her go to the ball with you."

"It is quite true, but of course you know what the consequences will be."

At these words the poor old rascal took hold of me in a way which would have frightened me if I had not possessed twice his strength, but it was only to embrace me.

We went back to the room, he in tears and I laughing. He ran and told his wife, who had not been able to believe in such luck any more than her husband, and Irene added a comic element to the scene by saying, "You must not think me a liar or that my parents suspected that I was imposing on them; they only thought you said fifty instead of a hundred, as if I were not worth such a sum."

"You are worth a thousand, my dear Irene; your courage in barring the way pleased me extremely. But you must come to the ball in a domino."

"Oh! you will be pleased with my dress."

"Are those the shoes and buckles you are going to wear? Have you no other stockings? Where are your gloves?"

"Good heavens! I have nothing."

"Quick! Send for the tradesmen. We will choose what we want, and I will pay."

Rinaldi went out to summon a jeweller, a shoemaker, a stocking maker and a perfumer. I spent thirty sequins on what I considered necessary, but then I noticed that there was no English point on her mask, and I burst out again. The father brought in a milliner, who adorned the mask with an ell of lace, for which I paid twelve sequins. Irene was in great delight, but her father and mother would have preferred to have the money in their pockets and at bottom they were right.

When Irene put on her fine clothes, I thought her delicious and saw what an essential thing dress is to a woman.

"Be ready," said I, "before the time for the opera to-morrow, for, before going to the ball, we will sup together in a room which belongs to me, where we shall be quite at our ease. You know what to expect," I added, embracing her. She answered me with an ardent kiss.

As I took leave of her father, he asked me where I was going after leaving Milan.

"To Marseilles, then to Paris and then to London, at which place I intend stopping a year."

"Your flight from The Leads was wonderfully lucky."

"Yes, but I risked my life."

"You have certainly deserved all your good fortune."

"Do you think so? I have used my fortune only in subservience to my pleasures."

"I wonder you do not have a regular mistress."

"The reason is that I like to be my own master. A mistress at my coat-tails would be more troublesome than a wife; she would be an obstacle to the numerous pleasant adventures I encounter in every town. For example, if I had a mistress, I should not be able to take the charming Irene to the ball to-morrow."

"You speak like a wise man."

"Yes, though my wisdom is by no means of the austere kind."

In the evening I went to the opera and should no doubt have gone to the card table if I had not seen Cesarino in the pit. I spent two delightful hours with him. He opened his heart to me and begged me to plead for him with his "sister," to get her to consent to his going to sea, for which he had a great longing. He said that he might make a large fortune by a judicious course of trading.

After a temperate supper with my dear boy, I went to bed. The next morning the fine young officer, the Marchioness of Q—'s brother, came and asked me to let him stay to breakfast. He said he had communicated my proposal to his sister and she had replied that I must be making a fool of him, as it was not likely that a man who lived as I did would be thinking of marrying.

"I did not tell you that I aspired to the honour of marrying her."

"No, and I did not say anything about marriage; but that's what the girls are always aiming at."

"I must go and disabuse her of the notion."

"That's a good idea; principals are always the best in these affairs. Come at two o'clock, I shall be dining there and, as I have to speak to her cousin, you will be at liberty to say what you like."

This arrangement suited me exactly. I noticed that my future brother-in-law admired a little gold case on my night table, so I begged him to accept it as souvenir of our friendship. He embraced me and put it in his pocket, saying he would keep it till his dying day.

"You mean till the day when it advances your suit with a lady," said I.

I was sure of having a good supper with Irene, so I resolved to take no dinner. As the count had gone to St. Angelo, fifteen miles from Milan, the day before, I felt obliged to wait on the countess in her room and beg her to excuse my absence at dinner. She was very polite and told me by no means to trouble myself. I suspected that she was trying to make an impression on me, but I wanted her to think she was doing so successfully. In my character of dupe I told her that in Lent I would make amends for the dissipation which prevented me paying my court to her. "Happily," I added, "Lent is not far off."

"I hope it will be so," said the deceitful woman, with an enchanting

smile of which only a woman with poison in her heart is capable. With these words, she took a pinch of snuff and offered me her box.

"But what is this, my dear countess? It isn't snuff."

"No," she replied, "it makes the nose bleed and is an excellent thing for headache."

I was sorry that I had taken it but said, with a laugh, that I had no headache and did not like my nose to bleed.

"It won't bleed much," said she, with a smile, "and it is really beneficial."

As she spoke, we both began to sneeze and I should have felt very angry if I had not seen her smile.

Knowing something about these sneezing powders, I did not think we should bleed, but I was mistaken. Directly after I felt a drop of blood and she took a silver basin from her night table.

"Come here," said she, "I am beginning to bleed, too."

There we were, bleeding into the same basin, facing each other in the most ridiculous position. After about thirty drops had fallen from each of us, the bleeding ceased. She was laughing all the time and I thought the best thing I could do was to imitate her example. We washed ourselves in fresh water in another basin.

"This admixture of our blood," said she, still smiling, "will create a sweet sympathy between us, which will end only *with the death of one or the other.*"

I could make no sense of this, but the reader will soon see that the wretched woman did not mean our friendship to last very long. I asked her to give me some of the powder, but she refused, and, on my enquiring the name of it, she replied that she did not know, as a lady friend had given it to her.

I was a good deal puzzled by the effects of this powder, never having heard of the like before, and, as soon as I left the countess, I went to an apothecary to enquire about it, but Mr. Drench was no wiser than I. He said, however, that euphorbia sometimes produced bleeding of the nose, but it was not a case of "sometimes" but "always." This small adventure made me think seriously. The lady was Spanish and she must hate me; and these two facts gave an importance to our blood-letting which it would not otherwise possess.

I went to see the two charming cousins and found the young officer with Mlle. F— in the next room by the garden. The lady was writing and, on the pretext of not disturbing her, I went after Mlle. Q—, who was in the garden. I greeted her politely and said I had come to apologise for a stupid blunder which must have given her a very poor opinion of me.

"I guess what you mean, but please understand that my brother gave me your message in perfect innocence. Let him believe what he likes. Do you think I really believed you were capable of taking such a step when we barely knew each other?"

"I am glad to hear you say so."

"I thought the best thing would be to give a matrimonial turn to

your gallantry. Otherwise my brother, who is quite a young man, might have interpreted it in an unfavourable sense."

"That was cleverly done and of course I have nothing more to say. Nevertheless, I am grateful to your brother for having given you to understand that your charms have produced a vivid impression on me. I would do anything to convince you of my affection."

"That is all very well, but it would have been wiser to conceal your feelings from my brother—and, allow me to add, from me as well. You might have loved me without telling me and then, though I should have perceived the state of your affections, I could have pretended not to do so. Then I should have been at my ease but, as circumstances now stand, I shall have to be careful. Do you see?"

"Really, marchioness, you astonish me. I was never so clearly convinced that I have done a foolish thing. And what is still more surprising is that I was aware of all you have told me. But you have made me lose my head. I hope you will not punish me too severely?"

"Pray inform me how it lies in my power to punish you."

"By not loving me."

"Ah! loving and not loving—that is out of one's power. Of a sudden we know that we are in love and our fate is sealed."

I interpreted these last words to my own advantage and turned the conversation. I asked her if she were going to the ball.

"No."

"Perhaps you are going incognito?"

"We should like to, but it is an impossibility; there is always someone who knows us."

"If you would take me into your service, I would wager anything that you would not be recognised."

"You would not care to trouble yourself about us."

"I like you to be a little sceptical, but put me to the proof. If you could manage to slip out unobserved, I would engage to disguise you in such a manner that no one would know you."

"We could leave the house with my brother and a young lady with whom he is in love. I am sure he would keep our counsel."

"I shall be delighted, but it must be for the ball on Sunday. I will talk it over with your brother. Kindly warn him not to let Barbaro know anything about it. You will be able to put on your disguises in a place I know of. However, we can settle about that later. I shall carry the matter through, you may be sure, with great secrecy. Permit me to kiss your hand."

She gave it me and, after imprinting a gentle kiss, I held it to my heart and had the happiness of feeling a soft pressure. I had no particular disguise in mind but, feeling sure of hitting on something, I put off the consideration of it till the next day; the present belonged to Irene. I put on my domino and went to The Three Kings, where I found Irene waiting for me at the door. She had run down as soon as she had seen my carriage, and I was flattered by this mark of her eagerness. We went to my rooms and I ordered the confectioner to get

me a choice supper by midnight. We had six hours before us, but the reader will excuse my describing the manner in which they were spent. We got up at midnight, pleasantly surprised to find ourselves famishing with hunger and a delicious supper waiting for us.

Irene told me that her father had taught her to deal in such a manner that she could not lose. I was curious to see how it was done and, on my giving her a pack of cards, she proceeded to distract my attention by talking to me and in a few minutes the thing was done. I gave her the hundred sequins I had promised her and told her to go on with her play.

"If you play on only a single card," said she, "you are sure to lose."

"Never mind; go ahead."

She did so and I was forced to confess that, if I had not been warned, I should never have detected the trick. I saw what a treasure she must be to the old rascal Rinaldi. With her air of innocence and gaiety, she would have imposed on the most experienced sharpers. She said, in a mortified manner, that she never had any opportunity of turning her talents to account, as their associates were always a beggarly lot. She added tenderly that, if I would take her with me, she would leave her parents flat and win treasures for me.

"When I am not playing against sharpers," she said, "I can also punt very well."

"Then you can come to Canano's bank and risk the hundred sequins I have given you. Put twenty sequins on a card and, if you win, go *paroli*, seven and the *va*, and leave the game when they turn up. If you can't make the three cards come out second, you will lose, but I will reimburse you."

At this, she embraced me and asked if I would take half the profits.

"No," said I, "you shall have it all."

I thought she would go mad with joy.

We went off in sedan-chairs and, the ball not having commenced, we went to the assembly rooms. Canano had not yet done anything and he opened a pack of cards and pretended not to recognise me, but he smiled to see the pretty masker, my companion, sit down and play instead of me. Irene made a profound bow as he made room for her by his side and, putting the hundred sequins before her, she began by winning a hundred and twenty-five, as, instead of going seven and the *va*, she went only *paix de paroli*. I was pleased to see her thus careful and I let her go on. In the following deal she lost on three cards in succession and then won another *paix de paroli*. She then bowed to the banker, pocketed her winnings and left the table, but, just as we were going out, I heard somebody sobbing and, on my turning to her, she said, "I am sure it is my father weeping for joy."

She had three hundred and sixty sequins, which she took to him after amusing herself for a few hours. I danced only one minuet with her, for my amorous exploits and the heavy supper I had taken had tired me and I longed for rest. I let Irene dance with whom she liked and, going into a corner, fell asleep. I woke up with a start and saw

Irene standing before me. I had been asleep three hours. I took her back to The Three Kings and left her in the charge of her father and mother. The poor man was quite alarmed to see so much gold on the table and told me to wish him a pleasant journey, as he was starting in a few hours. I could make no opposition and I did not wish to do so, but Irene was furious.

"I won't go," she cried; "I want to stay with my lover. You are the ruin of my life. Whenever anybody takes a liking to me, you snatch me away. I belong to this gentleman and I won't leave him."

However, she saw that I did not back her up, and she began to weep, then kissed me again and again and, just as she was going to sit down, worn out with fatigue and despair, I went off, wishing them a pleasant journey and telling Irene we should meet again. The reader will learn in due time when and how I saw them again. After all the fatigue I had gone through, I was glad to go to bed.

It was eight o'clock when the young lieutenant woke me.

"My sister has told me about the masquerade," said he, "but I have one secret to confide in you."

"Say on and count on my keeping your secret."

"One of the finest noblemen of the town, my friend and my cousin's lover, who has to be very careful of his actions on account of his exalted position, would like to be of the party if you have no objection. My sister and my cousin would very much like him to come."

"Of course he shall. I have been making my calculations for a party of five and now it will be a party of six, that is all."

"You really are a splendid fellow."

"On Sunday evening you must be at a certain place, of which I will tell you. First of all we will have supper, then put on our disguises and then go to the ball. To-morrow at five o'clock we shall meet at your sister's. All I need to know is, what is the height of your mistress and of the young nobleman."

"My sweetheart is two inches shorter than my sister and a little thinner; my friend is just about the same build as you are and, if you were dressed alike, you would be mistaken for each other."

"That will do. Let me think it over and leave me alone now; there's a Capuchin waiting for me and I am curious to learn his business."

A Capuchin had called on me and I had told Clairmont to give him an alms, but he had said he wanted to speak to me in private. I was puzzled, for what could a Capuchin have to say to me?

He came in and I was at once impressed by his grave and reverend appearance. I made him a profound bow and offered him a seat, but he remained standing and said:

"Sir, listen attentively to what I am about to tell you and beware of despising my advice, for it might cost you your life. You would repent when it was too late. After hearing me, follow my advice immediately, but ask no questions, for I can answer none. You may guess, perhaps, that what silences me is a reason incumbent on all Christians, the sacred seal of the confessional. You may be sure that

my word is above suspicion; I have no interests of my own to serve. I am acting in obedience to an inspiration; I think it must be your guardian angel speaking by my voice. God will not abandon you to the malice of your enemies. Tell me if I have touched your heart and if you feel disposed to follow the counsels I am going to give you."

"I have listened to you, father, with attention and respect. Speak freely and advise me. What you have said has not only moved me but has almost frightened me. I promise to do as you tell me if it is nothing against honour or the light of reason."

"Very good. A feeling of charity will prevent your doing anything to compromise me, whatever may be the end of the affair. You will not speak of me to anyone or say either that you know me or do not know me?"

"I swear to you, I will not, on my faith as a Christian. But speak, I entreat you. Your long preface has made me burn with impatience."

"This day, before noon, go by yourself to — Square, No. —, on the second floor, and ring the bell on your left. Tell the person who opens the door that you want to speak to Madame Z—. You will be taken to her room without any difficulty; I am sure your name will not be asked but, if they do ask you, give an imaginary name. When you are face to face with the woman, beg her to hear you and ask her the key to what you are going to confide to her and, to inspire confidence, put a sequin or two in her hand. She is poor and I am sure that your generosity will make her your friend. She will shut her door and tell you to say on.

"You must then look grave and tell her that you are not going to leave her house before she gives you the little bottle that a servant brought her yesterday with a note. If she resists, remain firm but make no noise; do not let her leave the room or call anybody. Finally, tell her that you will give her double the money she may lose by giving you the bottle and all that depends on it. Remember these words: 'and all that depends on it.' She will do whatever you want. It will not cost you much but, even if it did, your life is worth more than all the gold of Peru. I can say no more but, before I go, promise me you will follow my advice."

"Yes, reverend father, I will follow the inspiration of the angel who led you here."

"May God give you His blessing."

When the good priest went out, I did not feel at all disposed to laugh. Reason, certainly, bade me despise the warning, but my inherent superstition was too strong for my reason. Besides, I liked the Capuchin. He looked like a good man and I felt bound by the promise I had given him. He had persuaded me and my reason told me that a man should never go against his persuasion; in fine, I had made up my mind. I took the piece of paper on which I had written the words I had to use, put a pair of pistols in my pocket and told Clairmont to wait for me in the square. This last, I thought, was a precaution that could do no harm.

Everything happened as the good Capuchin had said. The awful old creature took courage at the sight of the two sequins and bolted her door. She began by laughing and saying that she knew I was amorous and that it was my fault if I was not happy, but that she would do my business for me. I saw by these words that I had to do with a pretended sorceress. The famous Mother Bontemps had spoken in the same way to me in Paris. But when I told her that I was not going to leave the room till I had got the mysterious bottle "and all that depended on it," her face became fearful; she trembled and would have escaped from the room; but I stood before her with an open knife and would not suffer her to pass. But on my telling her that I would give her double the sum she was to be paid for her witchcraft and that thus she would be the gainer and not lose by complying with my demands, she became calm once more.

"I shall lose six sequins," said she, "but you will gladly pay double when I show you what I have; I know who you are."

"Who am I?"

"Giacomo Casanova, the Venetian."

It was then I drew the twelve sequins from my purse. The old woman was softened at the sight of the money and said, "I would not have killed you outright, certainly, but I would have made you amorous and wretched."

"Explain what you mean."

"Follow me."

I went after her into a closet and was greatly amazed at seeing numerous articles about which my common sense could tell me nothing. There were phials of all shapes and sizes, stones of different colours, metals, minerals, big nails and small nails, pincers, crucibles, misshapen images and the like.

"Here is the bottle," said the old woman.

"What does it contain?"

"Your blood and the countess's, as you will see in this letter."

I understood everything then, and now I wonder I did not burst out laughing. But as a matter of fact, my hair stood on end as I reflected on the awful wickedness of which the Spanish woman was capable. A cold sweat burst out all over my body.

"What would you have done with this blood?"

"I should have smeared you with it."

"What do you mean by 'smeared'? I don't understand you."

"I will show you."

As I trembled with fear, the old woman opened a casket a cubit long, containing a waxen statue of a man lying on his back. My name was written on it and, though it was badly moulded, my features were recognisable. The image bore my cross of the Order of the Golden Spur and the generative organs were made of an enormous size. At this, I burst into a fit of hysterical laughter and had to sit down in an armchair till it was over.

As soon as I had got back my breath, the sorceress said:

"You laugh, do you? Woe to you if I had bathed you in the bath of blood mingled according to my art, and more woe still if, after I had bathed you, I had thrown your image on a burning coal."

"Is this all?"

"Yes."

"All the apparatus is to become mine for twelve sequins; here they are. And now, quick! light me a fire that I may melt this monster and, as for the blood, I think I will throw it out of the window." This was no sooner said than done.

The old woman had been afraid I would take the bottle and the image home with me and use them to her ruin, and she was delighted to see me melt the image. She told me I was an angel of goodness, and begged me not to tell anyone of what had passed between us. I swore I would keep my own counsel, even with the countess. I was astonished when she calmly offered to make the countess madly in love with me for another twelve sequins, but I politely refused and advised her to abandon her fearful trade if she did not want to be burnt alive.

I found Clairmont at his post and sent him home. In spite of all I had gone through, I was not sorry to have acquired the information and to have followed the advice of the good Capuchin, who really believed me to be in deadly peril. He had doubtless heard of it in the confessional from the woman who had carried the blood to the witch. Auricular confession often works miracles of this kind.

I was determined never to let the countess suspect that I had discovered her criminal project, and I resolved to behave towards her so as to appease her anger and make her forget the cruel insult to which I had subjected her. It was lucky for me that she believed in sorcery; otherwise she would have had me assassinated.

As soon as I got home, I chose the better of the two cloaks I had and presented her with it. She accepted the gift with exquisite grace and asked me why I gave it to her.

"I dreamt," said I, "that you were so angry with me that you were going to have me assassinated."

She blushed and answered that she had not gone mad. I left her absorbed in a sombre reverie. Nevertheless, whether she forgot and forgave or could hit upon no other way of taking vengeance, she was perfectly agreeable to me during the rest of my stay in Milan.

The count came back from his estate and said that we must really go and see the place at the beginning of Lent. I promised I would come, but the countess said she could not be of the party. I pretended to be disappointed but in reality her determination was an extremely pleasant one to me.

CHAPTER 96

As I had engaged myself to provide an absolutely impenetrable disguise, I wanted to invent a costume remarkable at once for its origi-

nality and its richness. I tortured my brains, so to speak, and my readers shall see if they think my invention was a good one.

I wanted someone on whom I could rely and, above all, a tailor. It may be imagined that my worthy gossip was the tailor I immediately thought of. Zenobia would be as serviceable as her husband; she could do some of the work and wait on the young ladies whom I was going to dress up.

I walked to my gossip's and told him to take me to the best second-hand-clothes dealer in Milan.

When we got to the shop, I said to the man, "I want to look at your very finest costumes, for both ladies and gentlemen."

"Would you like something that has never been worn?"

"Certainly, if you have such a thing."

"I have a very rich assortment of new clothes."

"Get me then in the first place a handsome velvet suit, all in one piece, which nobody in Milan will be able to recognise."

Instead of one, he showed me a dozen such suits, all in excellent condition. I chose a blue velvet, lined with white satin. The tailor conducted the bargaining and it was laid aside; this was for the pretty cousin's lover. Another suit of smooth, sulphur-coloured velvet throughout I put aside for the young officer. I also took two handsome pair of trousers in smooth velvet and two superb silk vests.

I then chose two dresses, one flame-coloured and the other purple, and a third dress in shot silk. This was for the officer's mistress. Then came batiste shirts, two for men and three for women, then handkerchiefs to match and, finally, scraps of velvet, satin, shot silk, etc., all of different colours.

I paid two hundred gold ducats for the lot but on condition that, if anybody came to know by any indiscretion of his that I had bought them, he should return the money and take back the materials in whatever condition they might be. The agreement was written out and signed and I returned with the tailor, who carried the whole bunch to my rooms over the pastry cook's.

When it was all spread out on the table, I told the tailor I would blow out his brains if he told anybody about it, and then, taking a stiletto, I proceeded to cut and slash the coats, vests and trousers all over, to the astonishment of the tailor, who thought I must be mad to treat such beautiful clothes in this manner.

After this operation, which makes me laugh to this day when I remember it, I took the scraps I had bought and said to the tailor:

"Now, gossip, it is your turn; I want you to sew these pieces into the holes I have made, and I hope your tailoring genius will aid you to produce some pretty contrasts. You see that you have your work cut out for you and no time to lose. I will see that your meals are properly served in an adjoining room, but you must not leave the house till the work is finished. I will go for your wife, who will help you, and you can sleep together."

"For God's sake, sir! you don't want the ladies' dresses treated like the coats and trousers?"

"Just the same."

"What a pity! It will make my wife cry."

"I will console her."

On my way to Zenobia's I bought five pair of white silk stockings, men's and women's gloves, two fine castor hats, two burlesque men's masks and three graceful-looking female masks. I also bought three pretty china plates and carried them all to Zenobia's in a sedan-chair.

I found that charming woman engaged in her toilette. Her beautiful tresses hung about her neck and her full breast was concealed by no kerchief. Such charms called for my homage and to begin with I devoured her with kisses. I spent half an hour with her and my readers will guess that it was well employed. I then helped her to finish her toilette and we went off in the sedan-chair.

We found the tailor engaged in picking out the scraps and cutting them to fit the holes I had made. Zenobia looked on in a kind of stupor and, when she saw me begin to slash the dresses, she turned pale and made an involuntary motion to stay my hand, for, not knowing my intentions, she thought I must be beside myself. Her husband had got hardened and reassured her and, when she heard my explanation, she became calm, though the idea struck her as a very odd one.

When it is a question of an affair of the heart, of the passions or of pleasure, a woman's fancy moves much faster than a man's. When Zenobia knew that these dresses were meant for three beautiful women whom I wished to make a centre of attraction to the whole assembly, she improved on my cuts and slashes and arranged the rents in such a manner that they would inspire passion without wounding modesty. The dresses were slashed especially at the breast, the shoulders and the sleeves, so that the lace shift could be seen, and in its turn the shift was cut open here and there and the sleeves were so arranged that half the arms could be seen. I was sure that she understood what I wanted and she would guide her husband right, and I left them, encouraging them to work their best and quickest. But I looked in three or four times in the day and was more satisfied every time with my idea and their execution of it.

The work was not finished till the Saturday afternoon. I gave the tailor six sequins and dismissed him, but kept Zenobia to attend on the ladies. I took care to place powder, pomade, combs, pins and everything that a lady needs, on the table, not forgetting ribbons and packthread.

The next day I found play going on in a very spirited manner, but the two cousins were not at the tables, so I went after them. They told me they had given up playing, as Barbaro always won.

"You have been losing then?"

"Yes, but my brother has won something," said the amiable Q—.

"I hope luck will declare itself on your side also."

"No, we are not lucky."

When their aunt left the room, they asked me if the lieutenant had told me a lady friend of theirs was coming to the ball with them.

"I know all," I answered, "and hope you will enjoy yourselves, but you will not do so more than I. I want to speak to the gallant lieutenant to-morrow morning."

"Tell us about our disguises."

"You will be disguised in such a manner that nobody will recognise you."

"But how shall we be dressed?"

"Very handsomely."

"But what costume have you given us?"

"That is my secret, ladies. However much I should like to please you, I shall say nothing till the time for you to dress comes around. Don't ask me anything more, as I have promised myself the enjoyment of your surprise. I am very fond of dramatic situations. You shall know all after supper."

"Are we to have supper then?"

"Certainly, if you would like it. I am a great eater myself and hope you will not let me eat alone."

"Then we will have some supper, to please you. We will take care not to eat much dinner, so as to be able to vie with you in the evening. The only thing that I am sorry about," added Mlle. Q—, "is that you should be put to such expense."

"It is a pleasure; and, when I leave Milan, I shall console myself with the thought that I have supped with the two handsomest ladies in town."

"How is Fortune treating you?"

"Canano wins two hundred sequins from me every day."

"But you win two thousand from him in one night."

"True; but I am behind, notwithstanding."

"You will break his bank on Sunday. We will bring you luck."

"Would you like to look on?"

"We should be delighted, but my brother says you don't want to go with us."

"Quite so, the reason is that I should be recognised. But I believe the gentleman who will accompany you resembles me."

"Very closely," said the cousin, "except that he is fair."

"All the better," said I. "The fair-complexioned always conquer the dark with ease."

"Not always," said the other. "But tell us, at any rate, whether we are to wear men's dresses."

"Fie! fie! I should be angry with myself if I had entertained such a thought."

"That's curious; why so?"

"I'll tell you. If the disguise is complete, I am disgusted, for the shape of a woman is much more marked than that of a man and consequently a woman in man's dress, who looks like a man, cannot have a good figure."

"But when a woman shows her shape well?"

"Then I am angry with her for showing too much, for I like to see the face and the general outlines of the form and to guess the rest."

"But the imagination is often deceptive."

"Yes, but it is with the face that I always fall in love and that never deceives me of and for itself. Then, if I have the good fortune to see anything more, I am always in a lenient mood and disposed to pass over small faults. You are laughing?"

"I am smiling at your impassioned arguments."

"Would you like to be dressed like a man?"

"I was expecting something of the kind but, after what you have said, we can make no more objections."

"I can imagine what you would say; I should certainly not take you for men, but I will say no more."

They looked at each other and blushed and smiled as they saw my gaze fixed on two pre-eminences which one would never expect to see in any man. We began to talk of other things and for two hours I enjoyed their lively and cultured conversation.

When I left them, I went off to my apartments and then to the opera, where I lost two hundred sequins, and finally to sup with the countess, who had become quite amiable. However, she soon fell back into her old ways when she found that my politeness was merely external and that I had no intentions whatever of troubling her in her bedroom again.

On the Saturday morning the young officer came to see me and I told him there was only one thing I wanted him to do, but it must be done exactly according to my instructions. He promised to follow them to the letter and I proceeded:

"You must get a carriage and four and, as soon as the five of you are in it, tell the coachman to drive as fast as his horses can gallop out of Milan and to bring you back again by another road to the house. There you must get out, send the carriage away, after enjoining silence on the coachman, and come in. After the ball you will undress in the same house and then go home in sedan-chairs. Thus we shall be able to baffle the inquisitive, who will be pretty numerous, I warn you."

"My friend the marquis will see to all that," said he, "and I promise you he will do it well, for he is longing to make your acquaintance."

"I shall expect you, then, at seven o'clock to-morrow. Warn your friend that it is important the coachman should not be known, and do not let anybody bring a servant."

All these arrangements being made, I determined to disguise myself as Pierrot. There's no disguise more perfect, for, besides concealing the features and shape of the body, it does not even let the colour of the skin remain recognisable. My readers may remember what happened to me in this disguise ten years before. I made the tailor get me a new Pierrot costume, which I placed with the others, and with two new purses, in each of which I had placed five hundred

sequins, I repaired to the pastry cook's before seven o'clock, I found the table spread and the supper ready. I shut up Zenobia in the room where the ladies were to make their toilette and at five minutes past seven the joyous company arrived.

The marquis was delighted to make my acquaintance and I welcomed him as he deserved. He was a perfect gentleman in every respect, handsome, rich, young and very much in love with the pretty cousin, whom he treated with great respect. The lieutenant's mistress was a delightful little lady and madly fond of her lover. As they were all aware that I did not want them to know their costumes till after supper, nothing was said about it and we sat down to table. The supper was excellent; I had ordered it in accordance with my own tastes—that is to say, everything was of the best and there was plenty of everything. When we had eaten and drunk well, I said:

"As I am not going to appear with you, I may as well tell you the parts you are to play. You are to be five beggars, two men and three women, all rags and tatters."

The long faces they pulled at this announcement were a pleasant sight to see.

"You will each carry a plate in your hands to solicit alms and you must walk together about the ballroom as a band of medics. But now follow me and take possession of your ragged robes."

Although I had much ado to refrain from laughing at the vexation and disappointment which appeared on all their faces, I succeeded in preserving my serious air. They did not seem in any kind of hurry to get their costumes and I was obliged to tell them they were keeping me waiting. They rose from the table and I threw the door open and all were struck with Zenobia's beauty as bowing to the company with much grace, she stood by the table on which the rich though tattered robes were displayed.

"Here, ladies," said I to the cousins, "are your dresses, and here is yours, mademoiselle—a little smaller. Here are your shifts, your handkerchiefs and your stockings and I think you will find everything you require on this table. Here are masks, the faces of which show so poorly beside your own, and here are three plates to crave alms. If anybody looks as high as your garters, they will see how wretched you are, and the holes in the stockings will let people know that you have not the wherewithal to buy silk to mend them. This packthread must serve you for buckles and we must take care that there are holes in your shoes and also in your gloves and, as everything must match, as soon as you have put on your chemises, you must tear the lace round the neck."

While I was going through this explanation, I saw surprise and delight efface the disappointment and vexation which had been there a moment before. They saw what a rich disguise I had provided for them and they could not find it in their hearts to say, "What a pity!"

"Here, gentlemen, are your beggar clothes. I forgot to lacerate

your beaver hats, but that is soon done. Well, what do you think of the costumes?"

"Now, ladies, we must leave you; shut the door fast, for it is a case of changing your shifts. Come, gentlemen, let us get to work."

The marquis was enthusiastic.

"What a sensation we shall create!" said he. "Nothing could be better."

In half an hour we were ready. The stockings in holes, the worn-out shoes, the lace in rags, the straggling hair, the sad masks, the notched plates—all made a picture of sumptuous misery hard to be described.

The ladies took more time on account of their hair, which floated on their shoulders in fine disorder. Mlle. Q—'s hair was especially fine; it extended almost to her knees.

When they were ready, the door was opened and we saw everything which would excite desire without wounding decency. I admired Zenobia's adroitness. The rents in dresses and chemises disclosed parts of their shoulders, their breasts and their arms, and their white legs shone through the holes in the stockings.

I showed them how to walk and sway their heads to and fro to excite compassion and yet be graceful, and how to use their handkerchiefs to show people the tears in them and the fineness of the lace. They were delighted and longed to be at the ball, but I wanted to be there first to have the pleasure of seeing them come in. I put on my mask, told Zenobia to go to bed, as we would not be back till day-break, and set out on my way.

I entered the ballroom and, as there were a score of Pierrots, nobody noticed me. Five minutes after there was a rush to see some maskers who were coming in and I stood so as to have a good view. The marquis came in first between the two cousins. Their slow, pitiful step matched the part wonderfully. Mlle. Q—, with her flame-coloured dress, her splendid hair and her fine shape, drew all eyes towards her. The astonished and inquisitive crowd kept silence for a quarter of an hour after they had come in and then I heard on every side, "What a disguise!" "It's wonderful!" "Who are they?" "Who can they be?" "I don't know." "I'll find out."

I enjoyed the results of my inventiveness.

The music struck up and three fine dominos went up to the three beggar girls to ask them to dance a minuet, but they excused themselves by pointing to their dilapidated shoes. I was delighted; it showed that they had entered into the spirit of the part.

I followed them about for a quarter of an hour and the curiosity about them only increased, and then I paid a visit to Canano's table, where play was running high. A masquer dressed in the Venetian style was punting on a single card, going fifty sequins *paroli* and *paix de paroli* in my fashion. He lost three hundred sequins, and, as he was a man of about the same height as myself, people said it was Casanova, but Canano would not agree. In order to be able to stay

at the table, I took up the cards and punted three or four ducats like a beginner. The next deal the Venetian masquer had a run of luck and, going *paroli*, *paix de paroli* and the *va*, won back all the money he had lost. The next deal was also in his favour and he collected his winnings and left the table.

I sat down in the chair he had occupied and a lady said, "That's the Chevalier de Seingalt."

"No," said another, "I saw him a little while ago in the ballroom disguised as a beggar, with four other masquers whom nobody knows."

"How do you mean, 'dressed as a beggar'?" said Canano.

"Why, in rags and the four others, too, but, in spite of that, the dresses are splendid and the effect is very good. They are asking for alms."

"They ought to be turned out," said another.

I was delighted to have attained my object, for the recognition of me was a mere guess. I began putting sequins on one card and lost five or six times running. Canano studied me, but I saw he could not make me out. I heard whispers running round the table.

"It isn't Seingalt; he doesn't play like that; besides, he is at the ball."

The luck turned; three deals were in my favour and brought me back more than I had lost. I continued playing with a heap of gold before me and, on my putting a fistful of sequins on a card, it came out and I went *paroli* and *paix de paroli*. I won again and, seeing that the bank was at a low ebb, I stopped playing. Canano paid me and told his cashier to get a thousand sequins and, as he was shuffling the cards, I heard a cry of "Here come the beggars."

The beggars came in and stood by the table, and Canano, catching the marquis's eye, asked him for a pinch of snuff. My delight may be imagined when I saw him modestly presenting a common horn snuffbox to the banker. I had not thought of this detail, which made everybody laugh immensely. Mlle. Q— stretched out her plate to ask an alms of Canano, who said, "I don't pity you with that fine hair of yours and, if you like to put it on a card, I will allow you a thousand sequins for it."

She gave no answer to this polite speech and held out her plate to me and I put a handful of sequins on it, treating the other beggars in the same way.

"Pierrot seems to like beggars," said Canano, with a smile.

The three mendicants bowed gratefully to me and left the room.

The Marquis Triulzi, who sat near Canano, said, "The beggar in the straw-coloured dress is certainly Casanova."

"I recognised him directly," replied the banker, "but who are the others?"

"We shall find out in due time."

"A dearer costume could not be imagined; all the dresses are quite new."

The thousand sequins came in and I carried them all off in two deals.

"Would you like to go on playing?" said Canano.

I shook my head and, indicating with a sign of my hand that I would take a cheque, he weighed my winnings and gave me a cheque for twenty-nine pounds of gold, amounting to two thousand five hundred sequins. I put away the cheque and, after shaking him by the hand, got up and rolled away in true Pierrot fashion and, after making the tour of the ballroom, went to a box on the third tier, of which I had given the key to the young officer, and there I found my beggars.

We took off our masks and congratulated each other on our success and told our adventures. We had nothing to fear from inquisitive eyes, for the boxes on each side of us were empty. I had taken them myself and the keys were in my pocket.

The fair beggars talked of returning me the alms I had given them, but I replied in such a way that they said no more about it.

"I am taken for you, sir," said the marquis, "and it may cause some annoyance to our fair friends here."

"I have foreseen that," I replied, "and I shall unmask before the end of the ball. This will throw all suppositions off the scent and nobody will succeed in identifying you."

"Our pockets are full of sweetmeats," said Mlle. Q—. "Everybody wanted to fill our plates."

"Yes," said the cousin, "everybody admired us; the ladies came down from their boxes to have a closer view of us and everyone said that no richer disguise could be imagined."

"You have enjoyed yourselves, then?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And I, too. I feel quite boastful at having invented a costume which has drawn all eyes upon you and yet has concealed your identity."

"You have made us all happy," said the lieutenant's little mistress. "I never thought I should have such a pleasant evening."

"*Finis coronat opus*," I replied, "and I hope the end will be even better than the beginning."

So saying, I gave my sweetheart's hand a gentle pressure and, whether she understood me or not, I felt her hand tremble in mine.

"We will go down now," said she.

"So will I, for I want to dance and I am sure I shall make you all laugh as Pierrot."

"Do you know how much money you gave each of us?"

"I cannot say precisely, but I believe I gave each about an equal share."

"That is so. I think it is wonderful how you could do it."

"I have done it a thousand times. When I lose a *paroli* of ten sequins I put three fingers into my purse and am certain to bring up thirty sequins. I would bet I gave you each from thirty-eight to forty sequins."

"Forty exactly. It's wonderful. We shall remember this masqued ball."

"I don't think anybody will imitate us," said the marquis.

"No," said the cousin, "and we would not dare to wear the same dresses again."

We put on our masks and I was the first to go out. After numerous little jocularities with the Harlequins, especially the female ones, I recognised Thérèse in a domino and, walking up to her as awkwardly as I could, asked her to dance with me.

"You are the Pierrot who broke the bank?" she said.

I answered the question in the affirmative by a nod.

I danced like a madman, always on the point of falling to the ground and never actually doing so.

When the dance was over, I offered her my arm and took her back to her box, where Greppi was sitting by himself. She let me come in and their surprise was great when I took off my mask. They had thought I was one of the beggars. I gave M. Greppi Canano's cheque and, as soon as he had handed me a receipt, I went down to the ball-room again with my mask off, much to the astonishment of the inquisitive, who had been sure that the marquis was I.

Towards the end of the ball I went away in a sedan-chair, which I stopped near the door of an hotel and a little further on I took another, which brought me to the door of the pastry cook's. I found Zenobia in bed. She said she had been sure I would come back by myself. I undressed as quickly as I could and got into bed with this Venus of a woman. She was absolute perfection. I am sure that, if Praxiteles had had her for a model, he would not have required several Greek beauties from which to compose his Venus. What a pity that such an exquisite figure should be the property of a sorry tailor! I had her entirely to myself for the first time. When we heard the trot of four horses, we rose and put on our clothes in a twinkling.

When the charming beggars came in, I told them that I should be able to help in their toilettes, as they had not to change their chemises, and they did not make many objections.

My gaze was fixed all the while on Mlle. Q—. I admired her charms and was delighted to see that she was not miserly in their display. After Zenobia had done her hair, she left her to me and went to attend on the others. She allowed me to put on her dress and did not forbid my eyes wandering towards a large rent in her chemise, which let me see almost the whole of one of her beautiful breasts.

"What are you going to do with this chemise?"

"You will laugh at our silliness. We have determined to keep everything as a memento of the splendid evening we have had. My brother will bring it all to the house. Are you coming to see us this evening?"

"If I were wise, I should avoid you."

"And, if I were wise, I shouldn't ask you to come."

"That is fairly answered! Of course I will come; but before we part may I ask one kiss?"

"Say 'two' "

Her brother and the marquis left the room, and two sedan-chairs I

had summoned took off the cousins. Two more came and were used by the lieutenant and his fair friend.

As soon as the marquis was alone with me, he asked me very politely to let him share in the expenses.

"I guessed you were going to humiliate me."

"Such was not my intention and I do not insist, but then you know I shall be humiliated."

"Not at all, I reckon on your good sense. You see that money costs me nothing. Besides, I give you my word to let you pay for all the pleasure parties we enjoy together during the carnival. We will sup here when you like, you shall invite the company and I will let you pay the bill."

"That arrangement will suit me admirably. We must be friends. I leave you with this charming attendant. I did not think such a beauty could exist in Milan unknown to all but you."

"She is a townswoman, who knows how to keep a secret. Do you not?"

"I would rather die than tell anyone that this gentleman is the Marquis of F—."

"That's right; always keep your word, and take this trifle as a souvenir of me."

It was a pretty ring, which Zenobia received with much grace; it might have been worth about fifty sequins.

When the marquis was gone, Zenobia undressed me and did my hair for the night and, as I got into bed, I gave her twenty-four sequins and told her she might go and comfort her husband.

"He won't be uneasy," said she, "he is a philosopher."

"He need be with such a pretty wife. Kiss me again, Zenobia, and then we must part."

She threw herself upon me, covering me with kisses and calling me her happiness and her Providence. Her fiery kisses produced their natural effect and, after she left me, I went to sleep.

It was two o'clock when I awoke ravenously hungry. I had an excellent dinner and then dressed to call on the charming Mlle. Q—, whom I did not expect to find too hard on me after what she had said. Everybody was playing cards, with the exception of herself. She was standing by a window, reading so attentively that she did not hear me come into the room, but, when she saw me near her, she blushed, shut up the book and put it in her pocket.

"I will not betray you," said I, "nor tell anyone that I surprised you reading a prayer-book."

"No, don't; for my reputation would be gone if I were thought to be a devotee."

"Has there been any talk of the masqued ball or of the mysterious masquers?"

"People talk of nothing else and condole with us for not having been to the ball, but no one can guess who the beggars were. It seems that an unknown carriage and four that sped like the wind took them as

far as the first stage and where they went next God alone knows! It is said that my hair was false and I have longed to let it down and thus give them the lie. It is also said that you must know who the beggars were, as you loaded them with ducats."

"We must let people say and believe what they like and not betray ourselves."

"You are right; and after all we had a delightful evening. If you acquit yourself of all commissions in the same way, you must be a wonderful man."

"But it is only you who could give me such a commission."

"I to-day and another to-morrow."

"I see you think I am inconstant, but believe me, if I find favour in your eyes, your face will ever dwell in my memory."

"I am certain you have told a thousand girls the same story and, after they admitted you to their favour, you have despised them."

"Pray do not use the word 'despise,' or I shall suppose you think me a monster. Beauty seduces me. I aspire to its possession and it is only when it is given me from other motives than love that I despise it. How should I despise one who loved me? I should first be compelled to despise myself. You are beautiful and I worship you, but you are mistaken if you think I should be content for you to surrender yourself to me out of mere kindness."

"Ah! I see it is my heart you want."

"Exactly."

"To make me wretched at the end of a fortnight."

"To love you till death and to obey your slightest wishes."

"My slightest wishes?"

"Yes, for to me they would be inviolable laws."

"Would you settle in Milan?"

"Certainly, if you made that a condition of my happiness."

"What amuses me in all this is that you are deceiving me without knowing it, if indeed you really love me."

"Deceiving you without knowing it! That is something new. If I am not aware of it, I am innocent of deceit."

"I am willing to admit your innocence, but you are deceiving me none the less, for, after you had ceased to love me, no power of yours could bring love back again."

"That, of course, might happen, but I don't choose to entertain such unpleasant thoughts; I prefer to think of myself as loving you to all eternity. It is certain at all events that no other woman in Milan has attracted me."

"Not the pretty girl who waited on us and whose arms you have possibly left an hour or two ago?"

"What are you saying? She is the wife of the tailor who made your clothes. She left directly after you and her husband would not have allowed her to come at all if he had not been aware that she would be wanted to wait on the ladies whose dresses he had made."

"She is wonderfully pretty. Is it possible that you are not in love with her?"

"How could one love a woman who is at the disposal of a low, ugly fellow? The only pleasure she gave me was by talking of you this morning."

"Of me?"

"Yes. You will excuse me if I confess to having asked her which of the ladies she waited on looked handsomest without her chemise."

"That was a libertine's question. Well, what did she say?"

"That the lady with the beautiful hair was perfect in every respect."

"I don't believe a word of it. I have learnt to change my chemise with decency and so as not to show anything I might not show to a man. She only wished to flatter your impertinent curiosity. If I had a maid like that, she should soon go about her business."

"You are angry with me."

"No."

"It's no good saying 'no'; your soul flashed forth in your denunciation. I am sorry to have spoken."

"Oh! it's of no consequence. I know men ask chambermaids questions of that kind and they all give answers like your sweetheart, who perhaps wanted to make you curious about herself."

"But how could she hope to do that by extolling your charms above those of the other ladies? And how could she know that I preferred you?"

"If she did not know it, I have made a mistake, but for all that, she lied to you."

"She may have invented the tale, but I do not think she lied. You are smiling again! I am delighted."

"I like to let you believe what pleases you."

"Then you will allow me to believe that you do not hate me."

"Hate you? What an ugly word! If I hated you, should I see you at all? But let's talk of something else. I want you to do me a favour. Here are two sequins; I want you to put them on the *ambe* in the lottery. You can bring me the ticket when you call again or, still better, you can send it me, but don't tell anybody."

"You shall have the ticket without fail, but why should I not bring it?"

"Because, perhaps, you are tired of coming to see me."

"Do I look like that? If so, I am very unfortunate. But what numbers will you have?"

"Three and forty; you gave them me yourself."

"How did I give them you?"

"You put your hand three times on the board and took up forty sequins each time. I am superstitious and you will laugh at me, I dare say, but it seems to me that you must have come to Milan to make me happy."

"Now you make me happy indeed. You say you are superstitious

but, if these numbers don't win, you mustn't draw the conclusion that I don't love you; that would be a dreadful fallacy."

"I am not so superstitious as all that nor so poor a logician."

"Do you believe I love you?"

"Yes."

"May I tell you so a hundred times?"

"Yes."

"And prove it in every way?"

"I must enquire into your methods before I consent to that, for it is possible that what you would call a very efficacious method might strike me as quite useless."

"I see you are going to make me sigh after you for a long time."

"As long as I can."

"And when you have no strength left?"

"I will surrender Does that satisfy you?"

"Certainly, but I shall exert all my strength to abate yours."

"Do so, I shall like it."

"And will you help me to succeed?"

"Perhaps."

"Ah, dear marchioness! you need only speak to make a man happy. You have made me really so and I am leaving you full of ardour."

On leaving this charming conversationalist, I went to the theatre and then to the faro table, where I saw the masquer who had won three hundred sequins the evening before. This night he was very unlucky. He had lost two thousand sequins and in the course of the next hour his losses doubled. Canano threw down his cards and rose, saying, "That will do." The masquer left the table. He was a Genoese named Spinola.

"The bank is prosperous," I remarked to Canano.

"Yes," he replied, "but it is not always so. Pierrot was very lucky the other night."

"You did not recognise me in the least?"

"No, I was so firmly persuaded that the beggar was you. You know who he is?"

"I haven't an idea. I never saw him before that day." In this last particular I did not lie.

"It is said that they are Venetians and that they went to Bergamo."

"It may be so, but I know nothing about them. I left the ball before they did."

In the evening I supped with the countess, her husband and Triulzi. They were of the same opinion as Canano. Triulzi said that I had let the cat out of the bag by giving the beggars handfuls of sequins.

"That is a mistake," I answered. "When the luck is in my favour, I never refuse anyone who asks me for money, for I have a superstition that I should lose if I did. I had won thirty pounds' weight of gold and could afford to let fools talk."

The next day I got the lottery ticket and took it to the marchioness. I felt madly in love with her because I knew she was in love with me.

Neither of them was playing and I spent two hours in their company, talking of love all the while and enjoying their conversation immensely, for they were exceedingly intelligent. I left them with the conviction that, if the cousin and not Mlle. Q— had been thrown in my way, I should have fallen in love with her in just the same manner.

Although the carnival lasts four days longer in Milan than anywhere else, it was now drawing to a close. There were three more balls. I played every day and every day I lost two or three hundred sequins. My prudence caused even more surprise than my bad fortune. I went every day to the fair cousins and made love, but I was always at the same point; I hoped but could get nothing tangible. The fair marchioness sometimes gave me a kiss, but this was not enough for me. It is true that so far I had not dared to ask her to meet me alone. As it was, I felt my love might die for want of food, and three days before the ball I asked her if she, her two friends, the marquis and the lieutenant would come and sup with me.

"My brother," she said, "will call on you to-morrow to see what can be arranged."

This was a good omen. The next day the lieutenant came. I had just received the drawings at the lottery and what was my surprise and delight to see the two numbers three and forty! I said nothing to the young marquis, as his sister had forbidden me, but I foresaw that this event would be favourable to my suit.

"The Marquis of F—," said the worthy ambassador, "asks you to supper in your own rooms with all the band of beggars. He wishes to give us a surprise and would be obliged if you would lend him the room to have a set of disguises made, and to ensure secrecy he wants you to let him have the same waiting-maid."

"With pleasure; tell the marquis that all shall be according to his pleasure."

"Get the girl to come there at three o'clock to-day and let the pastry cook know that the marquis has full powers to do what he likes in the place."

"Everything shall be done as you suggest."

I guessed at once that the marquis wanted to have a taste of Zenobia; but this seemed to me so natural that, far from being angry, I felt disposed to do all in my power to favour his plans. "Live and let live" has always been my maxim and it will be so to my dying day, though now I do but live a life of memories.

As soon as I was dressed, I went out and, having told the pastry cook to consider the gentleman who was coming as myself, I called on the tailor, who was delighted at my getting his wife work. He knew by experience that she was none the worse for these little absences.

"I don't need you," said I to the tailor, "as it is only women's dresses that have to be done. My good woman here will be sufficient."

"At three o'clock she may go and I shall not expect to see her again for three days."

After I had dined, I called as usual on the fair marchioness and

We followed him into the next room and he pointed out two thick bundles.

"Here, ladies, are your disguises," said he, "and here is your maid, who will help you, while we dress in another room."

He took the larger of the two bundles and, when we were shut up in our room, he undid the string and gave us our costumes, saying, "Let us be as quick as we can."

We burst out laughing to see a set of women's clothes. Nothing was wanting—chemises, embroidered shoes with high heels, superb garters and, to relieve us of the trouble of having our hair done, exquisite caps with rich lace coming over the forehead. I was surprised to find that my shoes fitted me perfectly, but I heard afterwards that he employed the same bootmaker as I did. Corsets, petticoats, gowns, kerchiefs, fans, work-bags, rouge-boxes, masks, gloves—all were there. We merely helped each other with our hair but, when it was all done, we looked very unattractive, with the exception of the young officer, who really might have been taken for a pretty woman; he had concealed his deficiency in feminine characteristics by false breasts and a bustle.

We took off our breeches one after the other.

"Your fine garters," said I to the marquis, "make me want to wear some, too."

"Exactly," said the marquis, "but the worst of it is, nobody will take the trouble to find out whether we have garters or not, for young ladies five feet ten in height will not inspire very ardent desires."

I had guessed that the girls would be dressed like men, and I was not mistaken. They were ready before us and, when we opened the door, we saw them standing with their backs to the fireplace.

They looked three young pages, minus the impudence, for, though they endeavoured to seem quite at their ease, they were rather embarrassed.

We advanced with the modesty of the fair sex and imitating the air of shy reserve which the part demanded. The girls of course thought themselves obliged to mimic the airs of men and they did not accost us like young men accustomed to behave respectfully to ladies. They were dressed as running footmen, with tight breeches, well fitting waistcoats, open throats, garters with a silver fringe, laced waistbands and pretty caps trimmed with silver lace and a coat of arms emblazoned in gold. Their lace shirts were ornamented with an immense frill of Alençon point. In this costume, which displayed their beautiful shapes under a veil almost transparent, they would have stirred the senses of a paralytic—and we had no symptoms of that disease. However, we loved them too well to frighten them.

After the silly remarks usual on such occasions had been passed, we began to talk naturally while waiting for supper. The ladies said that, as this was the first time they had dressed as men, they were afraid of being recognised.

"Supposing somebody recognised us," cried the cousin, "we should be undone!"

They were right, but our part was to reassure them, though I, at any rate, would have preferred to stay where we were.

We sat down to supper, each next to his sweetheart, and to my surprise the lieutenant's mistress was the first to begin the fun. Thinking that she could not pretend to be a man without being impudent, she began to toy with the lady-lieutenant, who defended himself like a prudish miss. The two cousins, not to be outdone, began to caress us in a manner that was rather free. Zenobia, who was waiting on us at table, could not help laughing when Mlle. Q— reproached her for having made my dress too tight in the neck. She stretched out her hand as if to toy with me, whereupon I gave her a slight box on the ear and, imitating the manner of a repentant cavalier, she kissed my hand and begged my pardon.

The marquis said he felt cold and his mistress asked him if he had his breeches on and put her hand under his dress to find out, but speedily drew it back with a blush. We all burst out laughing and she joined in and proceeded with her rôle of the hardy lover.

The supper was admirable, everything was choice and abundant. Warm with love and wine, we arose from the table, at which we had been for two hours, but, as we got up, sadness disfigured the faces of the two pretty cousins. They did not dare to go to the ball in a costume that would put them at the mercy of all the libertines there. The marquis and I felt they were right.

"We must make up our minds," said the lieutenant. "Shall we go to the ball or go home?"

"Neither," said the marquis, "we will dance here."

"Where are the violins?" asked his mistress. "You could not get them to-night for their weight in gold."

"Well," said I, "we will do without them. We will have some punch, laugh and be merry, and we shall enjoy ourselves better than at the ball and, when we are tired, we can go to sleep. We have three beds here."

"Two would be enough," said the cousin.

"True, but we can't have too much of a good thing."

Zenobia had gone to sup with the pastry cook's wife, but she was ready to come up again when she should be summoned.

After two hours spent in amorous trifling, the lieutenant's mistress, feeling a little dizzy, went into an adjoining room and lay down on the bed. Her lover was soon beside her.

Mlle Q—, who was in the same state, told me she would like to rest, so I took her into a room where she could sleep the night, and advised her to do so.

"I don't think I need distrust anyone," she said.

"We will leave the marquis with your cousin then," I replied, "and I will watch over you while you sleep."

"No, no, you shall sleep, too." So saying, she went into the dressing-room and asked me to get her cloak. I brought it to her and, when she came in, she said, "I breathe again; those dreadful trousers were too

tight; they hurt me." She threw herself on the bed, with nothing on besides her cloak.

"Where did the breeches hurt you?" said I

"I can't tell you, but I should think you must find them dreadfully uncomfortable."

"But, dearest, our anatomy is different and breeches do not trouble us at all where they hurt you."

As I spoke, I held her to my breast and dropped gently beside her on the bed. We remained thus a quarter of an hour without speaking, our lips glued together in one long kiss. I left her a moment by herself and, when I returned, she was between the sheets. She said she had undressed in order to be able to sleep better and, shutting her eyes, she turned away. I knew that the fortunate hour had come and, taking off my woman's clothes in a twinkling, I slipped into the bed beside her.

"If we were wise," said she, "instead of going to the ball again, we would come here and enjoy ourselves."

I kissed the mouth which told me so plainly that I was to be happy, and I convinced her by my transports that no man could love her as ardently as I did. I had no need to keep her awake; she showed no inclination for sleep.

When we were ready, I thanked the marquis and invited him to supper for the next ball night without any pretence of our going to the masquerade, if the ladies were willing. The lieutenant answered for them in the affirmative and his mistress threw her arms round his neck, reproaching him for having slept all night. The marquis confessed to the same crime and I repeated the words like an article of faith, while the ladies kissed us and thanked us for our kindness to them. We parted in the same way as before, except that this time the marquis remained with Zenobia.

I went to bed as soon as I got home, and slept till three o'clock. When I got up, I found the house empty, so I went to dine at the pastry cook's, where I found Zenobia and her husband, who had come to enjoy the leavings of our supper. He told me I had made his fortune, as the marquis had given his wife twenty-four sequins and the woman's dress he had worn. I gave her mine as well. I told my gossip that I should like some dinner, and the tailor went away in a grateful mood.

As soon as I was alone with Zenobia, I asked her if she were satisfied with the marquis.

"He paid me well," she answered, a slight blush mounting on her cheeks.

"I am very glad," said I. "No one can see you without loving you or love you without desiring to possess your charms."

"The marquis did not go so far"

"It may be so, but I am surprised to hear it."

When I had dined, I hastened to call on the fair marchioness, whom I loved more than ever after the delicious night she had given me. I wanted to see what effect she would have on me after making me so happy. She looked prettier than ever. She received me in a way be-

coming in a mistress who is glad to have acquired some rights over her lover.

"I was sure," said she, "that you would come and see me." Though her cousin was there, she kissed me so often and so ardently that there was no room for doubt as to the manner in which we had spent our night together. I passed five hours with her, which went by all too quickly, for we talked of love and love is an inexhaustible subject. This five hours' visit on the day after our bridal showed me that I was madly in love with my new conquest, while it must have convinced her that I was worthy of her affection.

Countess A— B— had sent me a note asking me to sup with her, her husband and the Marquis Triulzi and other friends. This engagement prevented my paying a visit to Canano, who had won a thousand sequins of me since my great victory as Pierrot. I knew that he boasted he was sure of me, but in my own mind I had determined to gain the mastery. At supper the countess waged war on me. I slept out at night. I was rarely to be seen. They tried to steal my secret from me and get some information as to my amorous adventures. It was known that I sometimes supped at Thérèse's with Greppi, who was laughed at because he had been silly enough to say that he had nothing to dread from my power. The better to conceal my game, I said he was quite right.

The next day Barbaro, who was as honest as most professional sharpers; brought me the two hundred sequins I had lent him, with a profit of two hundred more. He told me he had had a slight difference with the lieutenant and was not going to play any more. I thanked him for having presented me to the fair marchioness, telling him that I was quite in love with her and in hopes of overcoming her scruples. He smiled and praised my discretion, letting me understand that I did not take him in, but it was enough for me not to confess to anything.

About three o'clock I called on my sweetheart and spent five hours with her as before. As Barbaro was not playing, the servants had been ordered to say that no one was at home. Since I was the declared lover of the marchioness, her cousin treated me as an intimate friend. She begged me to stay in Milan as long as possible, not only to make her cousin happy but for her sake as well, since without me she could not enjoy the marquis's society in private and, while her father was alive, he would never dare to come openly to the house. She thought she would certainly become his wife as soon as her old father was dead, but she hoped vainly, for soon after the marquis fell into evil ways and was ruined.

Next evening we all assembled at supper and, instead of going to the ball, gave ourselves up to pleasure. We spent a delicious night, but it was saddened by the reflection that the carnival was drawing to a close and with it our mutual pleasures would be over.

On the eve of Shrove Tuesday, as there was no ball, I sat down to play and, not being able once to hit on three winning cards, I lost all the gold I had about me. I should have left the table as usual if a

woman disguised as a man had not given me a card and urged me by signs to play it. I risked a hundred sequins on it, giving my word for the payment. I lost and, in my endeavours to get back my money, I lost a thousand sequins, which I paid the next day.

I was just going out to console myself with the company of my dear marchioness when I saw the evil-omened masquer approaching, accompanied by a man, also in disguise, who shook me by the hand and begged me to come at ten o'clock to The Three Kings, to room number so-and-so, if the honour of an old friend was dear to me.

"What friend is that?"

"Myself."

"What is your name?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Then you need not tell me to come, for, if you were a true friend of mine, you would tell me your name."

I went out and he followed me, begging me to come with him to the end of the arcades. When we got there, he took off his mask and I recognised Croce, whom my readers may remember.

I knew he was banished from Milan and understood why he did not care to give his name in public, but I was exceedingly glad I had refused to go to his inn.

"I am surprised to see you here," said I.

"I dare say you are. I have come here in this carnival season, when one can wear a mask, to compel my relations to give me what they owe me; but they put me off from one day to another, as they are sure I shall be obliged to go when Lent begins."

"And will you do so?"

"I shall be obliged to, but, as you will not come and see me, give me twenty sequins, which will enable me to leave Milan. My cousin owes me ten thousand livres and will not pay me a tenth even. I will kill him before I go."

"I haven't a farthing and that masquer of yours made me lose a thousand sequins, which I do not know how to pay."

"I know; I am an unlucky man and bring bad luck to all my friends. It was I who told her to give you a card, in the hope that it would change the run against you."

"Is she a Milanese girl?"

"No, she comes from Marseilles and is the daughter of a rich agent. I fell in love with her, seduced her and carried her off, to her unhappiness. I had plenty of money then but, wretch that I am, I lost it all in Genoa, where I had to sell all my possessions to enable me to come here. I have been a week in Milan. Pray give me the wherewithal to escape."

I was touched with compassion and borrowed twenty sequins from Canano and gave them to the poor wretch, telling him to write to me.

This almsgiving did me good; it made me forget my losses and I spent a delightful evening with the marchioness.

The next day we supped together at my rooms and spent the rest of the night in amorous pleasures. That was Saturday, the last day of the

carnival in Milan, and I spent the whole of Sunday in bed, for the marchioness had exhausted me and I knew that a long sleep would restore my strength.

Early on Monday morning Clairmont brought me a letter which had been left by a servant. It had no signature and ran as follows

"Have compassion, sir, on the most wretched creature breathing. M. de la Croix undoubtedly has gone away in despair. He has left me here in the inn, where he has paid for nothing. Good God! what will become of me? I conjure you to come and see me, be it only to give me your advice."

I did not hesitate for a moment and it was not from any impulses of love or profligacy that I went, but from pure compassion. I put on my greatcoat and, in the same room in which I had seen Irene, I saw a young and pretty girl, about whose face there was something peculiarly noble and attractive. I saw in her innocence and modesty oppressed and persecuted. As soon as I came in, she humbly apologised for having dared to trouble me and asked me to tell a woman who was in the room to leave it, as she did not speak Italian.

"She has been tiring me for more than an hour. I cannot understand what she says, but I can make out that she wants to do me a service. However, I do not feel inclined to accept her assistance."

"Who told you to come and see this young lady?" said I to the woman.

"One of the servants of the inn told me that a young lady from foreign parts had been left alone here and was much to be pitied. My feelings of humanity made me come and see if I could be useful to her; but I see she is in good hands and I am very glad of it for her sake, poor dear!"

I saw that the woman was a procuress and I only replied with a smile of contempt.

The poor girl then told me briefly what I had already heard, and added that Croce, who called himself De la Croix, had gone to the gaming table as soon as he had got my twenty sequins and had then taken her back to the inn, where he had spent the next day in a state of despair, as he did not dare to show himself abroad in the daytime. In the evening he put on his mask and went out, not returning till the next morning.

"Soon after, he put on his greatcoat and got ready to go out, telling me that, if he did not return, he would communicate with me through you, at the same time giving me your address, of which I made use, as you know. He has not come back and, if you have not seen him, I am sure he has gone off on foot without a penny in his pocket. The landlord wants to be paid and, by selling all I have, I could satisfy his claims, but good God! what is to become of me then?"

"Dare you return to your father?"

"Yes, sir, I dare return to him. He will forgive me when on my knees and with tears in my eyes I tell him that I am ready to bury myself in a nunnery."

"Very good! Then I will take you to Marseilles myself and in the meanwhile I will find you a lodging with some honest people. Till then, shut yourself up in your room, do not admit anyone to see you and be sure I will have a care for you."

I summoned the landlord and paid the bill, which was a very small one, and told him to take care of the lady till my return. The poor girl was dumb with surprise and gratitude. I said goodbye kindly and left her without even taking her hand. It was not altogether a case of the Devil turning monk; I always had a respect for distress.

I had already thought of Zenobia in connection with the poor girl's lodging and went to see her on the spot. In her husband's presence I told her what I wanted and asked if she could find a corner for my new friend.

"She shall have my place," cried the worthy tailor, "if she won't mind sleeping with my wife. I will hire a small room hard by and sleep there as long as the young lady stays."

"That's a good idea, gossip, but your wife will lose by the exchange."

"Not much," said Zenobia, and the tailor burst out laughing.

"As for her meals," he added, "she must arrange that herself."

"That's a very simple matter," said I. "Zenobia will get them and I will pay for them."

I wrote the girl a short note, telling her of the arrangements I had made, and charged Zenobia to take her the letter. The next day I found her in the poor lodging with these worthy folks, looking pleased and ravishingly pretty. I felt that I could behave well for the present, but I sighed at the thought of the journey. I should have to put a strong restraint on myself.

I had nothing more to do in Milan, but the count had made me promise to spend a fortnight at St. Angelo. This was an estate belonging to him, fifteen miles from Milan, and the count spoke most enthusiastically of it. If I had gone away without seeing St. Angelo, he would have been exceedingly mortified. A married brother of his lived there and the count often said that his brother was longing to know me. When we returned, he would no doubt let me depart in peace.

I had made up my mind to show my gratitude to the worthy man for his hospitality, so on the fourth day of Lent I took leave of Thérèse, Greppi and the affectionate marchioness for two weeks and we set out on our way.

To my great delight the countess did not care to come. She much preferred staying in Milan with Triulzi, who did not let her lack for anything.

We got to St. Angelo at three o'clock and found that we were expected to dinner.

CHAPTER 97

THE manorial castle of the little town of St. Angelo is a vast and ancient building, dating back at least eight centuries but devoid of

regularity and not indicating the date of its erection by the style of its architecture. The ground floor consists of innumerable small rooms, a few large and lofty apartments and an immense hall. The walls, which are full of chinks and crannies, are of that immense thickness which proves that our ancestors built for their remote descendants and not in our modern fashion; for we are beginning to build in the English style, that is, barely for one generation. The stone stairs had been trodden by so many feet that one had to be very careful in going up or down. The floor was all of brick and, as it had been renewed at various epochs with bricks of divers colours, it formed a kind of mosaic not very pleasant to look upon. The windows were of a piece with the rest; they had no glass in them and, the sashes having in many instances given way, they were always open; shutters were utterly unknown there. Happily, the want of glass was not much felt in the genial climate of that region. The ceilings were conspicuous by their absence, but there were heavy beams, the haunts of bats, owls and other birds, and light ornament was supplied by the numerous spiders' webs.

In this great Gothic palace—for palace it was, rather than castle, having no towers or other attributes of feudalism except the enormous coat-of-arms which crowned the gateway—in this palace, I say, a memorial to the ancient glories of the Counts A— B—, which they loved better than the finest modern house, there were three sets of rooms better kept than the rest. Here dwelt the masters, of whom there were three: the Count A— B—, my friend; Count Ambrose, who always lived there; and a third, an officer in the Spanish Walloon Guards. I occupied the apartment of the last-named. But I must describe the welcome I received.

Count Ambrose received me at the gate of the castle as if I had been some high and puissant prince. The doors stood wide open on both sides, but I did not take too much pride to myself on this account, as they were so old that it was impossible to shut them.

The noble count, who held his cap in his hand and was decently dressed, but negligently (though he was only forty years old), told me with a highborn modesty that his brother had made a mistake in bringing me there to see their miserable place, where I should find none of those luxuries to which I had been accustomed, but he promised me a good "old-fashioned Milanese welcome" instead. This is a phrase of which the Milanese are very fond, but, as they put it into practice, it becomes them well. They are generally most worthy and hospitable people and contrast favourably with the Piedmontese and Genoese.

The worthy Ambrose introduced me to his countess and his two sisters-in-law; one of them was an exquisite beauty, rather deficient in manners, but this was no doubt due to the fact that they saw no polished company whatever. The other was a thoroughly ordinary woman, neither pretty nor ugly, of a type which is plentiful the world over. The countess looked like a Madonna; her features had something angelic about them in their dignity and openness. She came from

Lodi and had been married only two years. The three sisters were very young, very noble and very poor. While we were at dinner, Count Ambrose told me he had married a poor woman because he thought more of goodness than of riches.

"She makes me happy," he added, "and, though she brought me no dower, I seem to be a richer man, for she has taught me to look on everything we don't possess as a superfluity."

"There, indeed," said I, "you have the true philosophy of an honest man."

The countess, delighted at her husband's praise and my approval, smiled lovingly at him and took a pretty baby from the nurse's arms and offered it her alabaster breast. This is the privilege of a nursing mother; Nature tells her that, by doing so, she does nothing against modesty. Her bosom, feeding the helpless, arouses no other feelings than those of respect. I confess, however, that the sight might have produced a tenderer sentiment in me; it was exquisitely beautiful and I am sure that, if Raphael had beheld it, his Madonna would have been still more lovely.

The dinner was excellent, with the exception of the made dishes, which were detestable. Soup, beef, fresh-salted pork, sausages, mortadella, milk dishes, vegetables, game, mascarpon cheese, preserved fruits—all were delicious; but the count having told his brother that I was a great gourmand, the worthy Ambrose had felt it his duty to give me some ragouts which were as bad as can well be imagined. I had to taste of them out of politeness, but I made up my mind that I would do so no more; after dinner I took my host aside and showed him that, with ten plain courses, his table would be delicate and excellent and that he had no need of introducing any ragouts. From that time I had a choice dinner every day.

There were six of us at table and we all talked and laughed, with the exception of the fair Clementine. This was the young countess who had already made an impression on me. She spoke only when she was obliged to do so, and her words were always accompanied with a blush; but, as I had no other way of getting a sight of her beautiful eyes, I asked her a good many questions. However, she blushed so terribly that I thought I must be distressing her, and I left her in peace, hoping to become better acquainted with her later.

At last I was taken to my apartment and left there. The windows were glazed and curtained as in the dining-room, but Clairmont came and told me he could not unpack my trunks as there were no locks to anything and he should not care to take the responsibility. I thought he was right and went to ask my friend about it.

"There's not a lock nor a key," said he, "in the whole castle, except in the cellar, but everything is safe for all that. There are no robbers in St. Angelo and, if there were, they would not dare to come here."

"I daresay, my dear count, but you know it is my business to suppose robbers everywhere. My own valet might take the opportunity

of robbing me and you see I should have to keep silence if I were robbed."

"Quite so; I feel the force of your argument. To-morrow morning a locksmith shall put locks and keys to your doors and you will be the only person in the castle who is proof against thieves."

I might have replied in the words of Juvenal, "*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*," but I should have mortified him. I told Clairmont to leave my trunks alone till next day and I went out with Count A— B— and his sisters-in-law to take a walk in the town. Count Ambrose and his better half stayed in the castle, the good mother would never leave her nursling. Clementine was eighteen, her married sister being four years older. She took my arm and my friend offered his to Eleanor.

"We will go and see the beautiful penitent," said the count.

I asked him who "the beautiful penitent" was and he answered without troubling himself about his sisters-in-law:

"She was once a Lais of Milan and enjoyed such a reputation for beauty that not only all the flower of Milan but people from the neighbouring towns were at her feet. Her hall door was opened and shut a hundred times in a day and even then she was not able to satisfy the desires she aroused. At last an end came to what the old and devout called a scandal. Count Firmian, a man of learning and wit, went to Vienna and on his departure received orders to have her shut up in a convent. Our august Marie Thérèse cannot pardon mercenary beauty and the count had no choice but to have the fair sinner imprisoned. She was told that she had done amiss and acted wickedly; she was obliged to make a general confession and was condemned to a lifelong penance in this convent. She was absolved by Cardinal Pozzobonelli, Archbishop of Milan, who then confirmed her, changing the name of Thérèse, which she had received at the baptismal font, to Mary Magdalen, thus showing her how she should save her soul by following the example of her new patroness, whose wantonness had hitherto been her pattern.

"Our family are the patrons of this convent, which is devoted to penitents. It is situated in an inaccessible spot and the inmates are in the charge of a kind Mother Superior, who does her best to soften the manifold austerities of their existences. They only work and pray and see no one besides their confessor, who says mass every day. We are the only persons to whom the Superior would not dare to bar the doors of this prison, and she never takes it into her head to shut out those we bring with us."

This story touched me and brought tears to my eyes. Poor Mary Magdalen! Cruel Empress! I think I have noted in another passage the source of her austere virtue.

When we were announced, the Mother Superior came to meet us and took us into a large hall, where I soon made out the famous penitent amongst five or six other girls, who were penitents like herself but I presume for trifling offences, as they were all ugly. As soon as the poor

women saw us, they ceased working and stood up respectfully. In spite of the severe simplicity of her dress, Thérèse made a great impression on me. What beauty! What majesty brought low! With my profane eyes, instead of looking to the enormity of the offences for which she was suffering so cruelly, I saw before me a picture of innocence, a humbled Venus. Her fine eyes were fixed on the ground, but what was my surprise when, suddenly looking at me, she exclaimed:

"O my God! what do I see? Holy Mary, come to my aid! Begone, dreadful sinner, though thou deservest to be here more than I. Scoundrel!"

I did not feel inclined to laugh. Her unfortunate position and the similar apostrophe she had addressed to me pierced me to the heart. The Mother Superior hastened to say, "Do not be offended, sir, the poor girl has become mad and, unless she really has recognised you . . ."

"That is impossible, madame, I never saw her before."

"Of course not; but you must forgive her, as she has lost the use of her reason."

"Maybe the Lord has made her thus in mercy."

As a matter of fact, I saw more sense than madness in this outburst, for it must have been very grievous for the poor girl to have to encounter my idle curiosity in the place of her penitence. I was deeply moved and, in spite of myself, a big tear rolled down my face. The count, who had known her, laughed, but I begged him to restrain himself.

A moment after the poor wretch began again. She raved against me madly and begged the Mother Superior to send me away, as I had come there to damn her.

The good lady chid her with all a true mother's gentleness and told her to leave the room, adding that all who came there only desired that she be saved eternally. She was stern enough, however, to add that no one had been a greater sinner than she, and the poor Magdalen went out weeping bitterly.

If it had been my fortune to enter Milan at the head of a victorious army, the first thing I should have done would have been to set free this poor captive and, if the abbess had resisted, she would have felt the weight of my whip.

When Magdalen was gone, the Mother Superior told us that the poor girl had many good qualities and, if God willed that she keep some particle of sense, she did not doubt her becoming a saint like her patroness.

"She has begged me," she added, "to take down the pictures of St. Louis de Gonzaga and St. Anthony from the chapel wall because she says they distract her fearfully. I have thought it my duty to yield to her request, in spite of our confessor, who says it's all nonsense."

The confessor was a rude churl. I did not exactly tell the abbess that, but I said enough for a clever woman like her to grasp my meaning.

We left the sorrowful place in sadness and silence, cursing the sovereign who had made such ill use of her power.

If, as our holy religion maintains, there is a future life before us all, Marie Thérèse certainly deserves damnation, if only for the oppressions she has used towards those poor women who have to traffic in their charms. Poor Mary Magdalen had gone mad and suffered the torments of the damned because Nature had given her two of her best gifts, beauty and an excellent heart. You will say she had abused them, but for a sin which is for God alone to judge should a fellow creature and a still greater sinner have condemned her to such a fearful doom? I defy any reasonable man to answer in the affirmative.

On our way back to the castle Clementine, who was on my arm, laughed to herself once or twice. I felt curious to know what she was laughing at and said, "May I ask you, fair countess, why you laugh thus to yourself?"

"Forgive me; I was not amused at the poor girl's recognising you, for that must have been a mistake, but I cannot help laughing when I think of your face at her words, 'You are more deserving of imprisonment than I'."

"Perhaps you think she was right."

"I? Not at all. But how is it that she attacked you and not my brother-in-law?"

"Probably because she thought I looked a greater sinner than he."

"That, I suppose, must have been the reason. One should never heed the talk of mad people."

"You are sarcastic, but I take it all in good part. Perhaps I am as great a sinner as I look; but beauty should be merciful to me, for it is by beauty that I am led astray."

"I wonder the Empress does not shut up men as well as women."

"Perhaps she hopes to see them all at her feet when there are no more girls left to amuse them."

"That is a jest. You should rather say that she cannot forgive her own sex the lack of a virtue which she exercises so eminently and which is so easily observed."

"I have nothing to allege against the Empress's virtue, but with your leave I beg to entertain very strong doubts as to the possibility of the general exercise of that virtue which we call continence."

"No doubt everyone judges by his own standard. A man may be praised for temperance in whom temperance is no merit. What is easy to you may be hard to me and *vice versa*. Both of us may be right."

This interesting conversation made me compare Clementine to the fair marchioness at Milan, but there was this difference between them. Mlle. Q— spoke with an air of gravity and importance, whereas Clementine expounded her system with great simplicity and an utter indifference of manner. I thought her observations so keen and her utterance so perfect and artistic that I felt ashamed of having misjudged her at dinner. Her silence and the blush which mounted to her face when anyone asked her a question had made me suspect both confusion

and poverty in her ideas, for timidity is often another word for stupidity; but the conversation I have just reported made me feel that I had made a great mistake. The marchioness, being older and having seen more of the world, was more skilled in arguments; but Clementine had twice eluded my questions with the utmost skill and I felt obliged to award her the palm.

When we got back to the castle, we found a lady with her son and daughter, and another relative of the count, a young abbé, whom I found most objectionable.

He was a pitiless talker and, on the pretence of having seen me in Milan, he took the opportunity of flattering me in a disgusting manner. Besides, he made sheep's eyes at Clementine and I did not like the idea of having a fellow like that for a rival. I said very dryly that I did not remember him at all, but he was not a man of delicate feeling and this did not disconcert him in the least. He sat down beside Clementine and, taking her hand, urged her to add me to the list of her victims. She could do nothing else but laugh at silly talk of this kind; I knew it, but that laugh of hers, displeased me. I would have had her say I know not what, but something biting and sarcastic. Nothing of the kind; the impertinent fellow whispered something in her ear and she answered in the same way. This was more than I could bear. Some question or other was being discussed and the abbé asked my opinion. I do not remember what I answered, but I know I gave him a bitter reply, in the hope of putting him in a bad temper and reducing him to silence. But he was a battle charger and used to trumpet, fife and gun; nothing disconcerted him. He appealed to Clementine and I had the mortification of hearing her opinion given, though with a blush, in his favour. The fop was satisfied and kissed the young countess's hand with an air of fatuous happiness. This was too much and I cursed the abbé and Clementine, too. I rose from my seat and went to the window.

The window is a great blessing to an impatient man whom the rules of politeness in some degree constrain. He can turn his back on bores without their being able to charge him with direct rudeness, but people know what he means and that soothes his feelings.

I have noted this trifling circumstance only to point out how bad temper blinds its victims. The poor abbé vexed me because he made himself agreeable to Clementine, with whom I was already in love without knowing it. I saw in him a rival but, far from endeavouring to offend me, he had done his best to please me and I should have taken account of his good will. But, under such circumstances I have always given way to ill humour and now I am too old to begin curing myself. I don't think I need do so, for, if I am ill-tempered, the company politely say to one another that I belong to an earlier generation; and my misfortune obliges me to admit to myself that they are right.

Clementine had conquered me in the space of a few hours. True, I was an inflammable subject, but hitherto no beauty had committed such ravages upon me in so short a time. I did not doubt of success and I confess that there was a certain amount of vanity in this assur-

ance; but at the same time I was modest, for I knew that at the slightest slip the enterprise would miscarry. Thus I regarded the abbé as a wasp to be crushed as speedily as possible. I was also a victim to that most horrible of passions, jealousy; it seemed to me that, if Clementine was not in love with this man-monkey, she was extremely indulgent toward him; and with this idea I conceived a horrible plan of revenging my wrongs on her. Love is the god of nature, but this god is, after all, only a spoilt child. We know all his follies and frailties, but we still adore him.

My friend the count, who was surprised, I suppose, to see me contemplating the horizon for such a long time, came up to me and asked if I wanted anything.

"I am thinking some matter over," said I, "and must go and write one or two letters in my room till it is time for supper."

"Surely you won't leave us?" said he. "Clementine, help me to keep M. de Seingalt; you must make him postpone his letter-writing."

"But, my dear brother," said the charming girl, "if M. de Seingalt has business to do, it would be rude of me to try to prevent his doing it."

Though what she said was perfectly reasonable, it stung me to the quick; when one is in an ill humour, everything is fuel for the fire. But the abbé said pleasantly that I had much better come and make a bank at faro and, as everybody echoed this suggestion, I had to give in.

The cards were brought in and various-coloured counters handed round and I sat down, putting thirty ducats before me. This was a very large sum for a comany who played only for amusement's sake; fifteen counters were valued at only a sequin. Countess Ambrose sat at my right and the abbé at my left. As if they had laid a plot to vex and annoy me, Clementine had made room for him. I took a mere accident for a studied impertinence and told the poor man that I never dealt unless I had a lady on each side of me and never by any chance with a priest beside me.

"Do you think it would bring you ill luck?"

"I don't like birds of ill omen."

At this he got up and Clementine took his place.

At the end of three hours supper was announced. Everybody had won from me except the abbé; the poor devil had lost counters to the extent of twenty sequins.

As a relative, the abbé stayed to supper, but the lady and her children were asked in vain to do so.

The abbé looked wretched, which put me in a good humour and inclined me to be pleasant. I proceeded to flirt with Clementine and, by making her reply to the numerous questions I asked, I gave her an opportunity of displaying her wit and I could see that she was grateful. I was once more myself and took pity on the abbé and spoke to him politely, asking his opinion on some topic.

"I was not listening," said he, "but I hope you will give me my revenge after supper."

"After supper I shall be going to bed, but you shall have your revenge, and as much as you like of it, to-morrow, provided our charming hostesses like playing. I hope the luck will be in your favour."

After supper the poor abbé went sadly away and the count took me to my room, telling me that I could sleep securely in spite of the lack of keys, for his sisters-in-law, who were lodged in the next room, were no better off.

I was astonished and delighted at the trust he put in me and at the really magnificent hospitality (it must be remembered all things are relative) with which I was being treated in the castle.

I told Clairmont to be quick about putting my hair in curl-papers, for I was tired and in need of rest, but he was only half-way through the operation when I was agreeably surprised by the apparition of Clementine.

"Sir," said she, "as we haven't a maid to look after your linen, I have come to beg you to let me undertake that office."

"You! my dear countess?"

"Yes, I, sir, and I hope you will make no objection. It will be a pleasure to me and I hope to you as well. Let me have the shirt you are going to wear to-morrow and say no more about it."

"Very good, it shall be as you please."

I helped Clairmont to carry my linen trunk into her room and added:

"Every day I want a shirt, a collar, a front, a pair of drawers, a pair of stockings and two handkerchiefs; but I don't mind which you take, and I leave the choice to you as the mistress—as I wish you were in deed and truth. I shall sleep a happier sleep than Jove himself. Farewell, dear Hebe!"

Her sister Eleanore was already in bed and begged pardon for her position. I told Clairmont to go to the count directly and inform him that I had changed my mind about the locks. Should I be afraid for my poor properties when these living treasures were confided to me so frankly? I should have been afraid of offending them.

I had an excellent bed and slept wonderfully. Clairmont was doing my hair when my youthful Hebe presented herself with a basket in her hands. She wished me good day and said she hoped I would be contented with her handiwork. I gazed at her delightedly; no trace of false shame appeared on her features. The blush on her cheeks was a witness of the pleasure she experienced in being useful, a pleasure which is unknown to those whose curse is their pride, the characteristic of fools and upstarts. I kissed her hand and told her I had never seen linen so nicely done.

Just then the count came in and thanked Clementine for attending on me. I approved of that, but he accompanied his thanks with a kiss which was well received, and this I did not approve of at all. But you will say they were brother-in-law and sister-in-law? Just so, but I was jealous all the same. Nature is all-wise and it was Nature that made me jealous. When one loves and has not as yet gained possession, jeal-

ousy is inevitable; the heart must fear lest that which it longs for be carried away by another.

The count took a note from his pocket and begged me to read it. It came from his cousin, the abbé, who begged the count to apologise to me for him if he was unable to pay in the proper time, the twenty sequins he had lost to me, but he would discharge his debt in the course of the week.

"Very good! Tell him he can pay when he likes, but warn him not to play this evening. I will not take his bets."

"But you would have no objection to his punting with ready money."

"Certainly I should, unless he pays me first, otherwise he would be punting with my money. Of course it's a mere trifle and I hope he won't trouble himself in the least or put himself to any inconvenience to pay it."

"I am afraid he will be humiliated."

"So much the better," said Clementine. "What did he play for when he knew that he could not pay his debts if he incurred any? It will be a lesson to him."

This outburst was balm to my heart. Such is man, a mere selfish egotist when passion moves him.

The count made no reply but left us alone.

"My dear Clementine, tell me frankly whether the rather uncivil way in which I am treating the abbé has pained you. I am going to give you twenty sequins, do you send them to him and to-night he can pay me honourably and cut a good figure. I promise you no one shall know about it.

"Thank you, but the honour of the abbé is not dear enough to me for me to accept your offer. The lesson will do him good. A little shame will teach him that he must mend his ways."

"You will see, he won't come this evening."

"That may be, but do you think I shall care?"

"Well, yes, I did think so."

"Because we joked together, I suppose. He is a harebrained fellow, to whom I do not give two thoughts in the year."

"I pity him as heartily as I congratulate anyone of whom you do think."

"Maybe there is no such person."

"What! You have not yet met a man worthy of your regard?"

"Many worthy of regard but none of love."

"Then you have never been in love?"

"Never."

"Your heart is empty?"

"You make me laugh. Is it happiness? Is it unhappiness? Who can say? If it be happiness, I am glad, and if it be unhappiness, I do not care, for I do not feel it to be so."

"Nevertheless, it is a misfortune, and you will know it to have been so on the day in which you love."

"And, if I become unhappy through love, shall I not pronounce emptiness of heart to have been happiness?"

"I confess you would be right, but I am sure love would make you happy."

"I do not know. To be happy, two must live in perfect agreement; that is no easy matter and I believe it to be harder still when the bond is lifelong."

"I agree, but God sent us into the world that we might run the risk."

"To a man it may be a necessity and a delight, but a girl is bound by stricter laws."

"In Nature the necessity is the same, though the results are different, and the laws you speak of are laid down by society."

The count came in at this point and was astonished to see us together.

"I wish you would fall in love with one another," said he.

"You wish to see us unhappy, do you?" said she.

"What do you mean by that?" I cried.

"I should be unhappy with an inconstant lover and you would be unhappy, too, for you would feel bitter remorse for having destroyed my peace of mind."

After this she discreetly fled.

I remained as still as if she had petrified me, but the count, who never wearied himself with too much thinking, exclaimed, "Clementine is rather too romantic; she will get over it, however; she is young yet."

We went to bid good day to the countess, whom we found suckling her baby.

"Do you know, my dear sister," said the count, "the chevalier here is in love with Clementine and she seems inclined to pay him back in his own coin?"

The countess smiled and said, "I hope a suitable match like that may make us relatives."

There is something magical about the word "marriage," which often serves only to mask a very deceptive idea. What the countess said pleased me extremely and I replied with a bow of the most gracious character.

We went to pay a call on the lady who had come to the castle the day before. There was a regular canon there who, after a great many polite speeches in praise of my country (which he knew only from books), asked me of what order was the cross I carried on my breast.

I replied, with a kind of boastful modesty, that it was a peculiar mark of the favour of the Holy Father, the Pope, who had freely made me a knight of the Order of St. John Lateran and a prothonotary-apostolic.

This monk had stayed at home, far from the world, or else he would not have asked me such a question. However, far from thinking he was offending me, he thought he was honouring me by giving me an opportunity of talking of my own merit.

In London the greatest possible rudeness is to ask anyone what his

religion is and it is something the same in Germany, an Anabaptist is by no means ready to confess his creed. And in fact the best plan is never to ask any questions whatever, not even to inquire if a man has change for a louis.

Clementine was delightful at dinner. She replied wittily and gracefully to all the questions which were addressed to her. True, what she said was lost on the majority of her auditors—for wit cannot stand before stupidity—but I enjoyed her talk immensely. As she kept filling up my glass, I reproached her and this gave rise to the following little dialogue, which completed my conquest:

"You have no right to complain," said she. "Hebe's duty is to keep the cup of the chief of the gods always full."

"Very good; but you know Jupiter sent her away."

"Yes, but I know why. I will take care not to stumble in the same way; and no Ganymede shall take my place for a like cause."

"You are very wise. Jupiter was wrong and henceforth I will be Hercules. Will that please you, fair Hebe?"

"No; because he did not marry her till after her death."

"True, again. I will be Iolas then, for . . ."

"Be quiet. Iolas was old."

"True; but so was I yesterday. You have made me young again."

"I am very glad, dear Iolas; but remember what I did when he left me."

"And what did you do? I do not remember."

"I don't believe you."

"It is true, none the less."

"I took away the gift I had made him."

At these words this charming girl's face was suffused with blushes. I feared to touch her face, lest it burn my hand; but the rays that shone from her fair eyes pierced my heart and froze my veins.

Scientists, be not angry if I talk of "freezing rays." It is no miracle, but a very natural phenomenon, which is happening every day. A great love, which elevates a man's whole nature, is a strong flame born out of a great cold, such as I then felt for a moment; it would have killed me if it had lasted longer.

The superior manner in which Clementine had applied the story of Hebe convinced me not only that she had a profound knowledge of mythology, but also that she had a keen and far-reaching intellect. She had given me more than a glimpse of her learning; she had let me guess that I interested her and that she thought of me. These ideas, entering a heart which is already warm, speedily set all the senses in flames. In a moment all doubt was laid to rest; Clementine loved me and I was sure that we should be happy.

Clementine slipped away from the table to calm herself and thus I had time to recover from my astonishment.

"Pray, where was that young lady educated?" I said to the countess.

"In the country. She was always present when my brother had his lessons, but the tutor, Sardini, never took any notice of her; yet it

was only she who gained anything; my brother merely yawned. Clementine used to make my mother laugh and puzzled the old tutor sadly sometimes."

"Sardini wrote and published some poems which are not bad; but nobody reads them because they are so full of mythology."

"Quite so. Clementine possesses a manuscript with which he presented her, containing a number of mythological tales verified. Try to make her show you her books and the verses she used to write; she won't show them to any of us."

I was in a great state of admiration. When she returned, I complimented her upon her acquirements and said that, as I was a great lover of literature myself, I should be delighted if she would show me her verses.

"I should be ashamed. I had to give up my studies two years ago, when my sister married and we came to live here, where we see only plain folk who talk about the stable, the harvest and the weather. You are the first person I have seen who has talked to me about literature. If our old Sardini had come with us, I should have gone on learning, but my sister did not care to have him here."

"But, my dear Clementine," said the countess, "what do you think my husband could have done with an old man of eighty, whose sole accomplishments are weighing the wind, writing verses, and talking mythology?"

"He would have been useful enough," said the husband, "if he could have managed the estate, but the honest old man will not believe in the existence of rascals. He is so learned that he is quite stupid."

"Good heavens!" cried Clementine. "Sardini stupid? It is certainly easy to deceive him, but that is because he is so noble. I love a man who is easily deceived, but they call me silly."

"Not at all, my dear sister," said the countess. "On the contrary, there is wisdom in all you say, but it is wisdom out of place in a woman; the mistress of a household does not need to know anything about literature, poetry or philosophy and, when it comes to marrying you off, I am very much afraid that your tastes for this kind of thing will stand in your way."

"I know it and I am expecting to die a maid—not that it is much of a compliment to the men."

To know all that such a dialogue meant for me, the reader must imagine himself most passionately in love. I thought myself unfortunate. If I had been a nobleman and rich, I would have given a hundred thousand crowns and married her that moment. She told me Sardini was in Milan, very old and ill.

"Have you been to see him?" I asked.

"I have never been to Milan."

"Is it possible? It is not far from here."

"Distance is relative, you know."

This was beautifully expressed. It told me without any false shame that she could not afford to go, and I was pleased by her frankness.

But, in the state of mind I was in, I should have been pleased with anything she chose to do. There are moments in a man's life when the woman he loves can make anything of him.

I spoke to her in a manner which affected her so that she took me into a study next to her room to show me her books. There were only thirty in all, but they were well chosen, although somewhat elementary. A woman like Clementine needed something more.

"Do you know, my dear Hebe, that you need more books?"

"I have often suspected it, dear Iolas, without being able to say exactly what I need."

After spending an hour in glancing over Sardini's works, I begged her to show me her own.

"No," said she, "they are too bad."

"I expect so; but the good will outweigh the bad."

"I don't think so."

"Oh, yes! you needn't be afraid. I will forgive the bad grammar, bad style, absurd images, faulty method and even the verses that won't scan."

"That's too much, Iolas; Hebe doesn't need so vast a pardon as all that. Here, sir; these are my scribblings; sift the errors and defects. Read what you will."

I was delighted that my scheme of wounding her vanity had succeeded and I began by reading aloud an anacreontic, adding to its beauties by the modulation of my voice and keenly enjoying her pleasure at my finding her work so fair. When I improved a line by some trifling change, she noticed it, for she followed me with her eyes; but, far from being humiliated, she was pleased with my corrections. The picture was still hers, she thought, though with my skilled brush I brought out the lights and darkened the shadows, and she was charmed to see that my pleasure was as great as hers or even greater. The reading continued for two hours. It was a spiritual and pure, but most intensely voluptuous, enjoyment. Happy and thrice happy if we had gone no farther; but Love is a traitor who laughs at us when we think to play with him without falling into his nets. Shall a man touch hot coals and escape burning?

The countess interrupted us and begged us to join the company. Clementine hastened to put everything back and thanked me for the happiness I had given her. The pleasure she felt showed itself in her blushes and, when she came into the drawing-room, she was asked if she had been fighting, which made her blush still more.

The faro table was ready but, before sitting down, I told Clairmont to get me four good horses for the following day. I wanted to go to Lodi and back by dinner-time.

Everybody played as before, the abbé excepted, and he, to my huge delight, did not put in an appearance at all, but his place was taken by a canon, who punted a ducat at a time and had a pile of ducats before him. This made me increase my bank and, when the game was

over, I was glad to see that everybody had won except the canon, but his losses had not spoilt his temper.

Next day I started for Lodi at daybreak, without telling anybody where I was going, and bought all the books I judged necessary for Clementine, who knew only Italian. I bought numerous translations, which I was surprised to find at Lodi, which till then had been famous in my mind only for its cheese, usually called Parmesan. This cheese is made at Lodi, not Parma, and I did not fail to make an entry to that effect under the article "Parmesan" in my *Dictionary of Cheeses*, a work which I was obliged to abandon as beyond my powers, as Rousseau was obliged to abandon his *Dictionary of Botany*. This great but eccentric individual was then known under the pseudonym of "Renaud, the Botanist." *Quisque histrioniam exercet*. But Rousseau, great man though he was, was totally deficient in humour.

I conceived the idea of giving a banquet at Lodi the day after next and, a project of this kind not calling for much deliberation, I went forthwith to the best hotel to make the necessary arrangements. I ordered a choice dinner for twelve, paid the earnest money and made the host promise that everything should be of the best.

When I got back to St. Angelo, I had a sackful of books carried into Clementine's room. She was petrified. There were more than one hundred volumes, poets, historians, geographers, philosophers, scientists—nothing was forgotten. I had also selected some good novels, translated from the Spanish, English and French, for we have no good novels in Italian.

This admission does not prove by any means that Italian literature is surpassed by that of any other country. Italy has little to envy in other literatures and has numerous masterpieces, which are unequalled the whole world over. Where will you find a worthy companion to the *Orlando Furioso*? There is none, and this great work is incapable of translation. The finest and truest panegyric of Ariosto was written by Voltaire when he was sixty. If he had not made this apology for the rash judgment of his youthful days, he would not have enjoyed, in Italy at all events, that immortality which is so justly his due. Thirty-six years ago I told him as much and he took me at my word. He was afraid and he acted wisely.

If I have any readers, I ask their pardon for these digressions. They must remember that these *Memoirs* were written in my old age and the old are always garrulous. The time will come to them also and then they will understand that, if the aged repeat themselves, it is because they live in a world of memories, without a present and without a future.

I will now return to my narrative, which I have kept steadily in view.

Clementine gazed from me to the books and from the books to me. She wondered and admired and could scarcely believe this treasure belonged to her. At last she collected herself and said, in a tone full of gratitude, "You came to St. Angelo to make me happy."

Such a saying makes a man into a god. He is sure that she who speaks thus will do all in her power to make a return for the happiness which she has been given.

There is something supremely lovely in the expression of gratefulness on the face of the being one loves. If you have not experienced the feeling I describe, dear reader, I pity you and am forced to conclude that you must have been either awkward or miserly and therefore unworthy of love.

Clementine ate scarcely anything at dinner and afterwards retired to her room, where I soon joined her. We amused ourselves by putting the books in order and she sent for a carpenter to make a bookcase with a lock and key.

"It will be my pleasure to read these books," said she, "when you have left us."

In the evening she was lucky with the cards and in delightful spirits I asked them all to dine with me at Lodi, but, as the dinner was for twelve, the Countess Ambrose said she would be able to find in Lodi the two guests who were lacking, and the canon said he would take the lady friend with her two children.

The next day was one of happy quiet and I spent it without leaving the castle, being engaged in instructing my Hebe on the nature of the sphere and preparing her for the beauties of Wolf. I presented her with my case of mathematical instruments, which seemed to her invaluable.

I burned with passion for this charming girl; but would I have done so if her taste for literature and science had not been backed up by her personal charms? I suspect not. I like a dish pleasing to the palate but, if it is not pleasing to the eye as well, I do not taste it, but put it down as bad. The surface is always the first to interest; close examination comes afterwards. The man who confines himself to superficial charms is superficial himself, but with them all love begins except that which rises in the realm of fancy and this nearly always falls before the reality.

When I went to bed, still thinking of Clementine, I began to reflect seriously and was astonished to find that, during all the hours we had spent together, she had not aroused the slightest sensual feeling in me. Nevertheless, I could not assign the reason to fear nor shyness (which is unknown to me) nor to false shame nor to what is called a sense of duty. It was certainly not virtue, for I do not carry virtue so far as that. Then what was it? I did not tire myself by pursuing the question. I felt quite sure that the Platonic stage must soon come to an end, and I was sorry, but my sorrow was virtue *in extremis*. The fine things we read together interested us so strongly that we did not think of love nor of the pleasure we took in each other's company; but, as the saying goes, the Devil lost nothing by us. When intellect enters on the field, the heart has to yield; virtue triumphs, but the battle must not last long. Our conquests made us too sure, but this feeling of security was a Colossus whose feet were of clay; we knew

that we loved but were not sure that we were loved, but, when this became manifest, the Colossus had to fall to the ground.

This dangerous trust made me go to her room to tell her something about our journey to Lodi; the carriages were already waiting. She was still asleep, but my step on the floor made her wake with a start. I did not even think it necessary to apologise. She told me that Tasso's *Aminta* had interested her to such an extent that she had read it till she fell asleep.

"The *Pastor Fido* will please you still more."

"Is it more beautiful?"

"Not exactly."

"Then why do you say it will please me more?"

"Because it charms the heart. It appeals to our softest feelings and seduces us—and we love seduction."

"It is a seducer, then?"

"No, not a seducer; but seductive, like you."

"That's a good distinction. I will read it this evening. Now I am going to dress."

She put on her clothes in seeming oblivion that I was a man, but without showing any sights that could be called indecent. Nevertheless it struck me that, if she had thought I was in love with her, she would have been more reserved, for, as she put on her chemise, laced her corset, fastened her garters above her knee and drew on her boots, I saw glimpses of beauty which affected me so strongly that I was obliged to go out before she was ready, to dissipate a little the ardour she had kindled in my senses.

I took the countess and Clementine in my carriage and sat on the bracket seat holding the baby on my knee. My two fair companions laughed merrily, for I held the child as if to the manner born. When we had traversed half the distance, the baby demanded nourishment and the charming mother hastened to uncover a sphere over which my eyes roved with delight, not at all to her displeasure. The child left its mother's bosom satisfied and, at the sight of the liquor which flowed so abundantly I exclaimed:

"It must not be lost, madame; allow me to sip the nectar which will elevate me to the rank of the gods. Do not be afraid of my teeth." (I had some teeth in those days.)

The smiling countess made no opposition and I proceeded to carry out my design, while the ladies laughed that magic laugh which cannot be portrayed. The divine Homer is the only poet who has succeeded in delineating it in those lines in which he describes Andromache with the young Astyanax in her arms, when Hector is leaving her to return to the battle.

I asked Clementine if she would have the courage to grant me a similar favour.

"Certainly," said she, "if I had any milk."

"You have the source of the milk; I will see to the rest."

At this, the girl's face was suffused with such a violent blush that

I was sorry I had spoken; however, I changed the conversation and it soon passed away. Our spirits were so high that, when the time came for us to get down at the inn at Lodi, we could scarcely believe it possible, so swiftly had the time gone by.

The countess sent a message to a lady friend of hers, begging her to dine with us and bring her sister; while I dispatched Clairmont to a stationer's, where he bought me a beautiful morocco case with lock and key, containing paper, pens, sealing wax, inkwell, paper knife, seal and, in fact, everything necessary for writing. It was a present I meant to give Clementine before dinner. It was delightful to watch her surprise and pleasure and to read gratitude so legibly written in her beautiful eyes. There is not a woman in the world who cannot be overcome by being made grateful. It is the best and surest way to get on, but it must be skilfully used. The countess's friend came and brought her sister, a girl who was dazzlingly beautiful. I was greatly struck with her, but just then Venus herself could not have dethroned Clementine from her place in my affections. After the friends had kissed each other and expressed their joy at meeting, I was introduced and in so complimentary a manner that I felt obliged to turn it off with a jest.

The dinner was sumptuous and delicious. At dessert two self-invited guests came in, the lady's husband and the sister's lover, but they were welcome, for it was a case of the more, the merrier. After the meal, at the request of the company, I made a bank at faro and after three hours' play I was delighted to find myself a loser to the extent of forty sequins. It was these little losses at the right time which gave me the reputation of being the finest gamester in Europe.

The lady's lover was named Vigi and I asked him if he was descended from the author of the thirteenth book of the *Aeneid*. He said he was and that in honour of his ancestor he had translated the poem into Italian verse. I expressed myself curious as to his version and he promised to bring it to me in two days' time. I complimented him on belonging to such a noble and ancient family; Maffeo Vigi flourished at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

We started in the evening and arrived home in less than two hours. The moon, which shone brightly upon us, prevented my making any attempts on Clementine, who had put up one leg in order that she might be able to hold her little nephew with more ease. The pretty mother could not help thanking me warmly for the pleasure I had given them; I was a universal favourite.

We did not feel inclined to eat any supper and therefore retired to our apartments; and I accompanied Clementine, who told me that she was ashamed at not knowing anything about the *Aeneid*.

"Vigi will bring his translation of the thirteenth book and I shall not know a word about it."

I comforted her by telling her that we would read the fine translation by Annibale Caro that very night. It was amongst her books, as

also the version by Anguilara, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Marchetti's *Lucrecia*.

"But I wanted to read the *Pastor Fido*."

"We are in a hurry; we must read that another time."

"I will follow your advice in all things, my dear Iolas."

"That will make me happy, dearest Hebe."

We spent the night in reading that magnificent translation in Italian blank verse, but the reading was often interrupted by my pupil's laughter when we came to some rather ticklish passage. She was highly amused by the account of the chance which gave Æneas an opportunity of proving his love for Dido in a very uncomfortable posture, and still more when Dido, complaining of the treachery of Priam's son, says, "I might still pardon you if, before abandoning me, you had left me a little Æneas to play about these halls."

Clementine had cause to be amused, for the reproach has something laughable in it; but how is it that one does not feel inclined to smile when reading the Latin—*si quis mihi parvulus aula luderet Æneas*? The reason must be sought for in the grave and dignified nature of the Latin tongue.

We did not finish our reading till daybreak.

"What a night!" exclaimed Clementine, with a sigh. "It has been one of great pleasure to me. Has it not to you?"

"I have enjoyed it because you have."

"And if you had been reading by yourself?"

"It would have still been a pleasure, but a much smaller one. I love your intellect to distraction, Clementine, but tell me, do you think it possible to love the intellect without loving that which contains it?"

"No, for without the body the spirit would vanish away."

"I conclude from that that I am deeply in love with you and that I cannot pass six or seven hours in your company without longing to kiss you."

"Certainly, but we resist these desires because we have obligations to observe which would rise up against us if we violated them."

"True again, but, if your disposition at all resembles mine, this constraint must be very painful to you."

"Perhaps I feel it as much as you do, but it is my belief that only at first is it hard to withstand temptation. By degrees one gets accustomed to loving one another without running any risk and without effort at restraint. Our senses, at first so sharp, finally become blunted and, when this is the case, we may spend hours and days in safety, untroubled by desire."

"I have my doubts as far as I am concerned, but we shall see. Good night, fair Hebe."

"Good night, my good Iolas, may you sleep well!"

"My sleep will be haunted by visions of you."

THE ancients, whose fancy was so fertile in allegory, used to figure Innocence as playing with a serpent or with a sharp arrow. These sages had made a deep study of the human heart; and whatever discoveries modern science may have made, the old symbol may still be profitably studied by those who wish to gain a deep insight into the working of man's mind.

I went to bed and, after having dismissed Clairmont, began to reflect on my relations with Clementine, who seemed to have been made to shine in a sphere from which, in spite of her high birth, her intelligence and her rare beauty, her want of fortune kept her apart. I smiled to myself at her doctrines, which were as much as to say that the best way of curing appetite was to place a series of appetising dishes before a hungry man, forbidding him to touch them. Nevertheless I could but approve the words which she had uttered with such an air of innocence—that if one resists desires, there is no danger of one's being humiliated by giving way to them.

This humiliation would arise from a sense of duty and she honoured me by supposing that I had as high principles as herself. But at the same time the motive of self-esteem was also present and I determined not to do anything which would deprive me of her confidence.

As may be imagined, I did not awake till very late the next morning and, when I rang my bell, Clementine came in, looking very pleased and holding a copy of the *Pastor Fido* in her hand. She wished me good day and said she had read the first act and thought it very beautiful and she told me to get up, that we might read the second together before dinner.

"May I rise in your presence?"

"Why not? A man has need of very little care to observe the laws of decency."

"Then please give me that shirt."

She proceeded to unfold it and then put it over my head, smiling all the time.

"I will do the same for you at the first opportunity," said I.

She blushed and answered, "It's not nearly so far from you to me as it is from me to you."

"Divine Hebe, that is beyond my understanding. You speak like the Cumæan sibyl or as if you were rendering oracles at your temple in Corinth."

"Had Hebe a temple in Corinth? Sardini never said so."

"But Apollodorus says so. It was an asylum, as well as a temple. But come back to the point and pray do not elude it. What you say is opposed to all the laws of geometry. The distance from you to me ought to be precisely the same as from me to you."

"Perhaps, then, I said a stupid thing."

"Not at all, Hebe; you have an idea which may be right or wrong, but I want to bring it out. Come, tell me."

"Well, then, the two distances differ from each other with respect to the ascent and descent, or fall, if you like. Are not all bodies inclined to obey the laws of gravitation unless they are held back by a superior force?"

"Certainly."

"And is it not the case that no bodies move in an upward direction unless they are impelled?"

"Quite true."

"Then you must confess that, since I am shorter than you, I should have to ascend to attain you and ascension is always an effort; while, if you wish to attain me, you have only to let yourself go, which is no effort whatever. Thus it is no risk at all for you to let me put on your shirt, but it would be a great risk for me if I allowed you to do the same service for me. I might be overwhelmed by your too rapid descent on me. Are you persuaded?"

"'Persuaded' is not the word, fair Hebe. I am ravished in an ecstasy of admiration. Never was paradox so finely maintained. I might cavil and contest it, but I prefer to keep silence, admire and adore."

"Thank you, dear Iolas, but I want no favour. Tell me how you could disprove my argument?"

"I should attack it on the point of height. You know you would not let me change your chemise even if I were a dwarf."

"Ah, dear Iolas! we cannot deceive each other. Would that Heaven had destined me to be married to a man like you!"

"Alas! why am I not worthy of aspiring to such a position?"

I do not know where the conversation would have landed us, but just then the countess came to tell us that dinner was waiting, adding that she was glad to see we loved one another.

"Madly," said Clementine, "but we are discreet."

"If you are discreet, you cannot love madly."

"True, countess," said I, "for the madness of love and wisdom cannot dwell together. I should rather say we are reasonable, for the mind may be grave while the heart's gay."

We dined merrily together, then we played at cards and in the evening we finished reading the *Pastor Fido*. When we were discussing the beauties of that delightful work, Clementine asked me if the thirteenth book of the *Aeneid* was fine.

"My dear countess, it is quite worthless; and I praised it only to flatter the descendant of the author. However, the same writer made a poem on the tricks of countryfolk which is by no means devoid of merit. But you are sleepy and I am preventing you from undressing."

"Not at all."

She took off her clothes in a moment with the greatest coolness and did not indulge my licentious gaze in the least. She got into bed and I sat beside her; whereupon she sat up again and her sister turned her back upon us. The *Pastor Fido* was on her night table and, opening the book, I proceeded to read the passage where Mirtillo describes the sweetness of the kiss Amaryllis had given him, attuning my voice to the

sentiment of the lines. Clementine seemed as much affected as I and I fastened my lips on hers. What happiness! She drew in the balm of my lips with delight and appeared to be free from alarm, so I was about to clasp her in my arms when she pushed me away with the utmost gentleness, begging me to spare her.

This was virtue at bay. I begged her pardon and, taking her hand, breathed out upon it all the ecstasy of my lips.

"You are trembling," said she, in a voice that did but increase the amorous tumult of my heart.

"Yes, dearest countess, and I assure you I tremble for fear of you. Good night, I am going, and my prayer must be that I may love you less "

"Why so? To love less is to begin to hate. Do as I do and pray that your love may grow and likewise the strength to resist it."

I went to bed ill-pleased with myself. I did not know whether I had gone too far or not far enough; but what did it matter? One thing was certain, I was sorry for what I had done, and that was always a thought which pained me.

In Clementine I saw a woman worthy of the deepest love and the greatest respect and I knew not how I could cease to love her, nor yet how I could continue loving her without the reward which every faithful lover hopes to win.

"If she loves me," I said to myself, "she cannot refuse me, but it is my part to beg and pray and even push her to an extremity, that she may find an excuse for her defeat. A lover's duty is to force the woman he loves to surrender at discretion and love always absolves him for so doing."

According to this argument, which I coloured to suit my passion, Clementine could not refuse me unless she did not love me, and I determined to put her to the proof. I was strengthened in this resolve by the wish to free myself from the state of excitement I was in and I was sure that, if she continued obdurate, I should soon get cured. But at the same time I shuddered at the thought; the idea of my no longer loving Clementine seemed to me an impossibility and a cruelty.

After a troubled night I rose early and went to wish her good morning. She was still asleep, but her sister Eleanore was dressing.

"My sister," said she, "read till three o'clock this morning. Now that she has so many books, she is going quite mad over them. Let us play a trick on her; get into the bed beside her; it will be amusing to see her surprise when she wakes up."

"But do you think she will take it as a joke?"

"She won't be able to help laughing; besides, you are dressed."

The opportunity was too tempting and, taking off my dressing-gown, I gently crept into the bed and Eleanore covered me up to my neck. She laughed, but my heart was beating rapidly. I could not give the affair the appearance of a joke and I hoped Clementine would not wake for some time, that I might have a chance to compose myself.

I had been in this position for about five minutes when Clementine,

half asleep and half awake, turned over and, stretching out her arm, gave me a hasty kiss, thinking I was her sister. She then fell asleep again in the same position. I would have left her a long while thus, for her warm breath played on my face and gave me a foretaste of ambrosia; but Eleanore could restrain herself no longer and, bursting into a peal of laughter, forced Clementine to open her eyes. Nevertheless, she did not discover that she was holding me in her arms till she saw her sister standing beside the bed, laughing.

"This is a fine trick," said she. "You are two charmers, indeed!"

This quiet reception gave me back my self-composure and I was able to play my part properly.

"You see," said I, "I have had a kiss from my sweet Hebe."

"I thought I was giving it to my sister. 'Tis the kiss that Amaryllis gave to Mirtillo."

"It comes to the same thing. The kiss has produced its effect and Iolas is young again."

"Dear Eleanore, you have gone too far, for we love each other and I was dreaming of him."

"No, no," said her sister, "Iolas is dressed. Look!"

So saying, the little wanton with a swift movement uncovered me, but at the same time she uncovered her sister and Clementine with a little scream veiled the charms which my eyes had devoured for a moment, but as one sees the lightning. I had seen the cornice and the frieze of the altar of Love.

Eleanore then went out and I remained gazing at the treasure I desired but did not dare to seize. At last I broke the silence.

"Dearest Hebe," said I, "you are certainly fairer than the cupbearer of the gods. If I were Jupiter, I should certainly act otherwise than he did."

"Sardini told me that Jupiter drove Hebe away, and now I ought to drive Jupiter away out of revenge."

"Yes; but my angel, I am Iolas and not Jupiter. I adore you and I seek to quench the desires which torture me."

"This is a trick between you and Eleanore."

"My dearest, it was all pure chance. I thought I should find you dressed and I came in to wish you good day. You were asleep and your sister was dressing. I gazed at you and Eleanore suggested that I lie down beside you, to enjoy your astonishment when you awoke. I ought to be grateful to her for a pleasure which has turned out so enjoyably. But the beauties she disclosed for me surpass all the ideas I had formed on the subject. My charming Hebe will not refuse to pardon me."

"No, since all is the result of chance. But it is curious that, when one loves passionately, one always feels inquisitive concerning the person of the beloved object."

"It is a very natural feeling, dearest. Love itself is a kind of curiosity, if it be lawful to put curiosity in the rank of passions; but you have not that feeling about me?"

"No, for fear you might disappoint me, for I love you and I want everything to speak in your favour."

"I know you might be disappointed and consequently I must do everything in my power to preserve your good opinion."

"Then you are satisfied with me?"

"Surely. I am a good architect and I think you are grandly built."

"Stop. Iolas, do not touch me, it is enough that you have seen me."

"Alas! it is by touching that one rectifies the mistakes of the eyes; one judges thus of smoothness and solidity. Let me kiss these two fair sources of life. I prefer them to the hundred breasts of Cybele and I am not jealous of Athys."

"You are wrong there, Sardini told me that it was Diana of Ephesus who had the hundred breasts."

How could I help laughing to hear mythology issuing from Clementine's mouth at such a moment! Could any lover foresee such an incident? I pressed with my hand her alabaster breast and yet the desire of knowledge overcame love in Clementine's heart. But, far from mistaking her condition, I thought it a good omen. I told her she was perfectly right and I was wrong, and a feeling of literary vanity prevented her opposing my pressing with my lips a rosy bud which stood out in relief against the alabaster sphere.

"Dear Hebe, you make me happy."

"I am glad to hear it, but I think the kiss on the lips is much better."

"Certainly, because the pleasure is reciprocal and consequently greater."

"You teach by precept and example, too. Cruel teacher! Enough; this pleasure is too sweet. Love must be looking at us and laughing."

"Why should we not let him enjoy a victory which would make us both happier?"

"Because such happiness is not built on a sure foundation. No, no! put your weapons down. If we can kill each other with kisses, let us kiss on; but let us use no other arms."

After our lips had clung to each other cruelly but sweetly, she paused and, gazing at me with eyes full of passion, begged me to leave her.

The situation in which I found myself is impossible to describe. I deplored the prejudice which had constrained me and I wept with rage. I cooled my ardour and returned to her room.

She was writing.

"I am delighted to see you back," said she. "I am full of the poetic frenzy and propose to tell in verse the story of the victory we have gained."

"A sad victory, abhorred by Love, hateful to Nature."

"That will do nicely. We will each write a poem—I to celebrate the victory and you to deplore it. But you look sad."

"I am in pain; but you cannot understand the reason."

Clementine did not reply, but I could see that she was affected. I suffered pain, and sleep was the only thing which would restore the balance of my constitution.

We went down to dinner, but I could not eat. I could not give heed to the reading of the translation which M. Vigî had brought with him, and I even forgot to compliment him upon it. I begged the count to hold the bank for me and asked the company to allow me to lie down, nobody could tell what was the matter with me, though Clementine may have had her suspicions.

At supper-time Clementine, accompanied by a servant, brought me a delicate cold collation and told me that the bank had won. It was the first time it had done so, for I had always taken care to play a losing game. I made a good supper but remained still melancholy and silent. When I had finished, Clementine bade me good night, saying that she was going to write her poem.

I, too, was in the mood; I finished my poem and made a fair copy of it before going to bed. In the morning Clementine came to see me and gave me her piece, which I read with pleasure, though I suspect the delight my praise gave her was at least equal to my enjoyment of her poem.

Then came the turn of my composition and before long I noticed that the picture of my suffering was making a profound impression on her. Big tears rolled down her cheeks, and from her eyes shot forth tender glances. When I had finished, I had the happiness of hearing her say that, if she had known physiology better, she would not have behaved so.

We took a cup of chocolate together and I then begged her to lie down beside me in bed without undressing and treat me as I had treated her the day before, that she might have some experience of the martyrdom I had sung in my verses. She smiled and agreed, on condition that I should do nothing to her.

It was a cruel condition, but it was the beginning of victory and I had to submit. I had no reason to repent of my submission, for I enjoyed the despotism she exercised on me and the pain she must be in that I did nothing to her. In vain I urged her to satisfy herself, to refuse her desires nothing, but she persisted in maintaining that she did not wish to go any further.

"Your enjoyment cannot be so great as mine," said I. But her subtle wit never left her without a reply.

"Then," said she, "you have no right to ask me to pity you."

The test, however, was too sharp for her. She left me in a state of great excitement, giving me a kiss which took all doubts away, and saying that in love we must be all or nothing.

We spent the day in reading, eating and walking and in converse grave and gay. I could not see, however, that my suit had progressed, as far as the events of the morning seemed to indicate. She wanted to reverse the medal of Aristippus, who said, in speaking of Laïs, "I possess her, but she does not possess me." She wanted to be my mistress without my being her master. I ventured to bewail my fate a little, but that did not seem to advance my cause.

Three or four days after I asked Clementine in the presence of her

sister to let me lie in bed beside her. This is the test proposed to a nun, a widow, a girl afraid of consequences, and it nearly always succeeds.

I wished the girls good night and retired in some embarrassment. I pondered over Clementine's strange resistance, which could only mean that I had not inspired her with sufficient love. I resolved on overcoming her by an almost infallible method. I would procure her pleasures that were new to her, without sparing expense. I could think of nothing better than to take the whole family to Milan and give them a sumptuous banquet at my pastry cook's. "I will take them there," I said to myself, "without saying a word about our destination till we are on our way, for, if I were to name Milan, the count might feel bound to tell his Spanish countess, that she might have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of her sisters-in-law, and this would vex me to the last degree." The party would be a great treat to the sisters, who had never been in Milan, and I resolved to make the expedition as splendid as I possibly could.

When I awoke the next morning, I wrote to Zenobia to buy three dresses of the finest Lyons silk for three young ladies of rank. I sent the necessary measurements and instructions as to the trimming. The Countess Ambrose's dress was to be white satin with a rich border of Valenciennes lace. I also wrote to M. Greppi, asking him to pay for Zenobia's purchases. I told her to take the three dresses to my private lodgings and lay them on the bed and give the landlord a note I enclosed. This note ordered him to provide a banquet for eight persons, without sparing expense. On the day and hour appointed, Zenobia was to be at the pastry cook's, ready to wait on the three ladies. I sent the letter by Clairmont, who returned before dinner, bearing a note from Zenobia assuring me that all my wishes should be carried out. After dessert I broached my plan to the countess, telling her that I wanted to give a party like the one at Lodi, but on two conditions: the first, that no one was to know our destination till we were in the carriages, and the second, that after dinner we should return to St. Angelo.

Out of politeness the countess looked at her husband before accepting the invitation, but he cried out, without ceremony, that he was ready to go if I took the whole family.

"Very good," said I, "we will start at eight o'clock to-morrow and nobody need be at any trouble; the carriages are ordered."

I felt obliged to include the canon because he was a great courtier of the countess and also because he lost money to me every day and thus it was he, in fact, who was going to pay for the expedition. That evening he lost three hundred sequins and was obliged to ask me to give him three days' grace to pay the money. I replied by assuring him that all I had was at his service.

When the company broke up, I offered my hand to Hebe and escorted her and her sister to their room. We had begun to read Fontenelle's *Plurality of Worlds* and I had thought we would finish it that night; but Clementine said that, as she had to get up early, she would want to get to sleep early also.

"You are right, dearest Hebe; do you go to bed and I will read to you."

She made no objection, so I took the Ariosto and began to read the history of the Spanish princess who fell in love with Bradamante. I thought that, by the time I had finished, Clementine would be ardent, but I was mistaken; both she and her sister seemed pensive.

"What is the matter with you, dearest? Has Ricciardetto displeased you?"

"Not at all; he pleased me and, in the princess's place, I should have done the same, but we shall not sleep all night and it is your fault."

"What have I done, pray?"

"Nothing, but you can make us happy and give us a great proof of your friendship."

"Speak, then. What is it you want of me? I would do anything to please you. My life is yours. You shall sleep soundly."

"Well, then, tell us where we are going to-morrow."

"Have I not already said that I would tell you the moment we start?"

"Yes, but that won't do. We want to know now and, if you won't tell us, we shan't sleep all night and we shall look frightful to-morrow."

"I should be so sorry, but I don't think you could look frightful."

"You don't think we can keep a secret. It is nothing very important, is it?"

"No, it is not very important, but all the same it is a secret."

"It would be dreadful if you refused me."

"Dearest Hebe! how can I refuse you anything? I confess freely that I have been wrong in keeping you waiting so long. Here is my secret: you are to dine with me to-morrow."

"With you? Where?"

"In Milan."

In their immoderate joy they got out of bed and, without caring for their state of undress, threw their arms around my neck, covered me with kisses, clasped me to their breasts and finally sat on my knees.

"We have never seen Milan," they cried, "and it has been the dream of our lives to see that splendid town. How often I have been put to the blush when I have been forced to confess that I have never been to Milan."

"It makes me very happy," said Hebe, "but my happiness is troubled by the idea that we shall see nothing of the town, for we shall have to return after dinner. It is cruel! Are we to go fifteen miles to Milan, only to dine and come back again? At least we must see our sister-in-law."

"I have foreseen all your objections and that was the reason I made a mystery of it, but it has been arranged. You don't like it? Speak and tell me your pleasure."

"Of course we like it, dear Iolas. The party will be charming and perhaps, if we knew all, the very restrictions are all for the best."

"It may be so, but I may not tell you any more now."

"And we will not press you."

In an ecstasy of joy she began to embrace me again and Eleanore said that she would go to sleep, so as to be more on the alert for the morrow. This was the best thing she could have done. I knew the fortunate hour was at hand and, exciting Clementine by my fiery kisses, at last I was in full possession of what I had so long desired to attain.

I spent two hours in this manner and then went to bed.

At eight o'clock we were all assembled round the breakfast-table but, in spite of my own high spirits, I could not make the rest of the company share them. All were silent and pensive; curiosity showed itself on every face. Clementine and her sister pretended to share the general feeling and were silent like the rest, while I looked on and enjoyed their expectancy.

Clairmont, who had fulfilled my instructions to the letter, came in and told us the carriages were at the door. I asked my guests to follow me and they did so in silence. I put the countess and Clementine in my carriage, the latter holding the baby on her lap, her sister and the three gentlemen being seated in the other carriage. I called out, with a laugh, "Drive to Milan."

"Milan! Milan!" they exclaimed with one voice. "Capital! capital!"

Clairmont galloped on in front of us and went off. Clementine pretended to be astonished, but her sister looked as if she had known something of our destination before. All care, however, had disappeared and the highest spirits prevailed. We stopped at a village half-way between St. Angelo and Milan to blow the horses and everybody got down.

"What will my wife say?" asked the count.

"Nothing, for she will not know anything about it and, if she does, I am the only guilty party. You are to dine with me in a suite of rooms which I have occupied incognito since I was in Milan—for you will understand that I could not have my wants attended to at your house, where the place is already taken."

"And how about Zenobia?"

"Zenobia was a lucky chance and is a very nice girl, but she would not suffice for my daily fare."

"You are a lucky fellow!"

"I try to make myself comfortable."

"My dear husband," said the Countess Ambrose, "you proposed a visit to Milan two years ago and the chevalier proposed it a few hours ago, and now we are on our way."

"Yes, sweetheart, but my idea was that we should spend a month there."

"If you want to do that," said I, "I will see to everything"

"Thank you, my dear sir; you are really a wonderful man."

"You do me too much honour, count; there is nothing wonderful about me, I am merely accomplishing easily an easy task."

"Yes; but you will confess that a thing may be difficult either from the way in which we regard it or from the position in which we find ourselves."

"You are quite right."

When we were again on our way, the countess said, "You must confess, sir, that you are a very fortunate man."

"I do not deny it, my dear countess, but my happiness is due to the company I find myself in; if you were to expel me from yours, I should be miserable."

"You are not the kind of man to be expelled from any society."

"That is a very kindly compliment."

"Say, rather, a very true one."

"I am happy to hear you say so, but it would be both foolish and presumptuous of me to say so myself."

Thus we made merry on our way, above all at the expense of the canon, who had been begging the countess to intercede with me to give him leave to absent himself half an hour.

"I want to call on a lady," said he "I should lose her favour forever if she came to know that I had been in Milan without paying her a visit."

"You must submit to the conditions," replied the amiable countess, "so don't count on my intercession."

We got to Milan exactly at noon and stepped out at the pastry cook's door. The landlady begged the countess to confide her child to her care and showed her a bosom which proved her fruitfulness. This offer was made at the foot of the stairs and the countess accepted it with charming grace and dignity. It was a delightful episode, which chance had willed should adorn the entertainment I had invented. Everybody seemed happy, but I was the happiest of all. Happiness is purely a creature of the imagination. If you wish to be happy, fancy that you are so, though I confess that circumstances favourable to this state are often beyond our control. On the other hand, unfavourable circumstances are mostly the result of our own mistakes.

The countess took my arm and we led the way into my room, which I found exquisitely neat and clean. As I had expected, Zenobia was there, but I was surprised to see Croce's mistress, looking very pretty; however, I pretended not to know her. She was well dressed and her face, free from the sadness it had borne before, was so seductive in its beauty that I felt vexed at her appearance at that particular moment.

"There are two pretty girls," said the countess. "Who are you, pray?"

"We are the chevalier's humble servants," said Zenobia, "and we are here only to wait on you."

Zenobia had taken it on herself to bring her lodger, who began to speak Italian and looked at me in doubt, fearing that I was displeased at her presence. I had to reassure her by saying I was very glad she had come with Zenobia. These words were as balm to her heart; she smiled again and became more beautiful than ever. I felt certain that she would not remain unhappy long; it was impossible to behold her without one's interest being excited in her favour. A bill signed by the Graces can never be protested; anyone with eyes and a heart honours it at sight.

My "humble servants" took the ladies' cloaks and followed them into the bedroom, where the three dresses were laid out on a table I knew only the white satin and lace one, for that was the only one I had designed. The countess, who entered before her sisters, was the first to notice it and exclaimed:

"What a lovely dress! To whom does it belong, M. de Seingalt? You ought to know."

"Certainly. It belongs to your husband, who can do what he likes with it, and I hope, if he gives it to you, you will accept it. Take it, count; it is yours; and, if you refuse, I will positively kill myself."

"We love you too well to drive you to an act of despair. The idea is worthy of your nobility of heart. I take your beautiful present with one hand and with the other I deliver it to her to whom it really belongs."

"What, dear husband! is this beautiful dress really mine? Whom am I to thank? I thank you both and I must put it on for dinner."

The two others were not made of such rich materials, but they were more showy and I was delighted to see Clementine's longing gaze fixed upon the one I had intended for her. Eleanore in her turn admired the dress that had been made for her. The first was in shot satin, ornamented with lovely wreaths of flowers; the second was sky-blue satin, with a thousand flowers scattered all over. Zenobia took upon herself to say that the first was for Clementine.

"How do you know?"

"It is the longer and you are taller than your sister."

"That is true. It is really mine, then?" said she, turning to me.

"If I may hope that you will deign to accept it."

"Surely, dear Iolas, and I will put it on directly."

Eleanore maintained that her dress was the prettier and said she was dying to put it on.

"Very good, very good!" I exclaimed, in high glee. "We will leave you to dress; here are your maids."

I went out with the two brothers and the canon and remarked that they looked quite embarrassed. No doubt they were pondering on the prodigality of gamblers—easy come, easy go. I did not interrupt their thoughts, for I loved to astonish people... I confess it was a feeling of vanity which raised me above my companions—in my own eyes at any rate, and that was enough for me. I should have despised anyone who told me that I was being laughed at, but I daresay it would have been only the truth.

I was in the highest spirits and they soon proved infectious. I embraced Count Ambrose affectionately, begging his pardon for having presumed to make the family a few small presents, and I thanked his brother for having introduced me to them. "You have all given me such a warm welcome," I added, "that I felt obliged to give you some small proof of my gratitude."

The fair countesses soon appeared, dazzling with joy and with their gay attire.

"You must have contrived to take our measures," said they, "but we cannot imagine how you did it."

"The funniest thing is," said the eldest, "that you have had my dress made so that it can be let out when necessary without destroying the shape. But what a beautiful piece of trimming! It is worth four times as much as the dress itself."

Clementine could not keep away from the looking-glass. She fancied that in the colours of her dress, rose and green, I had indicated the characteristics of the youthful Hebe. Eleanore still maintained that her dress was the prettiest of all.

I was delighted with the pleasure of my fair guests and we sat down to table with excellent appetites. The dinner was extremely choice; but the finest dish of all was a dish of oysters, which the landlord had dressed *à la maître d'hôtel*. We enjoyed them immensely. We finished off three hundred of them, for the ladies relished them extremely and the canon seemed to have an insatiable appetite, and we washed down the dishes with numerous bottles of champagne. We stayed at table for three hours, drinking, singing and jesting, while my "humble servants," whose beauty almost rivalled that of my guests, waited upon us.

Towards the end of the meal the pastry cook's wife came in with the countess's baby at her breast. This was a dramatic stroke. The mother burst into a cry of joy and the woman seemed quite proud of having suckled the scion of so illustrious a house for nearly four hours. It is well known that women, even more than men, are wholly under the sway of the imagination. Who can say that this woman, simple and honest like the majority of the lower classes, did not think that her own offspring would be ennobled by being suckled at breasts which had nourished a young count? Such an idea is, no doubt, foolish, but that is the very reason why it is dear to the hearts of the people.

We spent another hour in taking coffee and punch and then the ladies went to change their clothes again. Zenobia took care that their new ones should be carefully packed in cardboard boxes and placed under the seat of my carriage. Croce's abandoned mistress found an opportunity of telling me that she was very happy with Zenobia. She asked me when we were to start.

"You will be in Marseilles," said I, pressing her hand, "a fortnight after Easter at latest."

Zenobia had told me that the girl had an excellent heart and behaved very discreetly and that she should be very sorry to see her go. I gave Zenobia twelve sequins for the trouble she had taken.

I was satisfied with everything and paid the worthy pastry cook's heavy bill. I noticed we had emptied no less than twenty bottles of champagne, though it is true that we drank very little of any other wine, as the ladies preferred champagne.

I loved and was loved, my health was good, I had plenty of money, which I spent freely; in fine, I was happy. I loved to say so to myself in defiance of those sour moralists who pretend that there is no true happiness on this earth. It is the expression "on this earth" which makes me

happy The keenest wit has to remain silent and take refuge in kisses
"Would you like to take me away with you?" said she. "I am ready to follow you and it would make me happy If you love me, you ought to be enchanted for your own sake Let us make each other happy, dearest."

"I could not dishonour your family."

"Do you not think me worthy of becoming your wife?"

"You are worthy of a crown and it is I who am all unworthy of possessing such a wife You must know that I have nothing in the world except my fortune, and that may leave me to-morrow. By myself I do not dread the reverses of fortune, but I should be wretched if, after my linking your fate with mine, you were forced to undergo any privation."

"I think, I know not why, that you can never be unfortunate and that you cannot be happy without me. Your love is not so ardent as mine, you have not so great a faith."

"My angel, if my faith is weaker than yours, that is the result of cruel experience, which makes me tremble for the future Affrighted love loses strength as it gains reason."

"Cruel reason! Must we, then, prepare to part?"

"We must indeed, dearest; it is a hard necessity, but my heart will ever be yours. I shall go away your fervent adorer and, if fortune favours me in England, you will see me again next year. I will buy an estate wherever you like and it shall be yours on your wedding day; our children and literature will be our delights."

"What a happy prospect! A golden vision indeed! I would that I might fall asleep dreaming thus and wake not till that blessed day, or wake only to die if it is not to be. But what shall I do if you have left me with child?"

"Divine Hebe, you need not fear. I have taken care of that "

"Taken care? I did not think of that, but I see what you mean and I am very much obliged to you. Alas! perhaps after all it would have been better if you had not taken any precautions, for surely you were not born to make me unhappy and you could never have abandoned the mother and the child."

"You are right, sweetheart, and, if before two months have elapsed, you find any signs of pregnancy in spite of my precautions, you have only to write to me and, whatever my fortune may be, I will give you my hand and legitimise our offspring. You would, it is true, be marrying beneath your station, but you would not be the less happy for that, would you?"

"No, no! to bear your name and win your hand would be the crowning of all my hopes. I should never repent having given myself wholly to you."

"You make me happy "

"All of us love you, all say that you are happy and that you deserve your happiness. What praise is this! You cannot know how my heart

beats when I hear you lauded in your absence. When they say I love you, I answer that I adore you, and you know that I do not lie."

It was with such dialogues that we passed away the interval between our amorous transports on the last five or six nights of my stay. Her sister slept, or pretended to sleep. On leaving Clementine, I went to bed and did not rise till late and then I spent the whole day with her either in private or with the family. It was a happy time. How was I able, free as the air, a perfect master of my movements, of my own free will to put my happiness away from me? I cannot understand it now.

My luck had made me win all the worthy canon's money, which in turn I passed on to the family at the castle. Clementine alone would not profit by my inattentive play, but the last two days I insisted on taking her into partnership and, as the canon's bad luck still continued, she profited to the extent of a hundred louis. The worthy monk lost a thousand sequins, of which seven hundred remained in the family. This was paying well for the hospitality I had received, and, as it was at the expense of a monk, though a worthy one, the merit was all the greater.

The last night, which I spent entirely with my countess, was very sad, we must have died of grief if we had not taken refuge in the transports of love. Never was night better spent. Tears of grief and tears of love followed one another in rapid succession. We had at last to tear ourselves apart. Eleanore had seized the opportunity of our sleeping for a few moments and had softly risen and left us alone. We felt grateful to her and agreed that she must either be very insensible or have suffered torments in listening to our voluptuous combats. I left Clementine and went to my room to make my toilette.

When we appeared at the breakfast table, we looked as if we had been on the rack and Clementine's eyes betrayed her feelings, but our grief was respected. I could not be gay in my usual manner, but no one asked me the reason. I promised to write to them and come and see them again the following year. I did write to them, but I left off doing so in London because the misfortunes I experienced there made me lose all hope of seeing them again, I never did see any of them again, but I have never forgotten Clementine.

Six years later, when I came back from Spain, I heard to my great delight that she was living happily with Count N—, whom she had married three years after my departure. She had two sons; the younger, who must now be twenty-seven, is in the Austrian army. How delighted I should be to see him! When I heard of Clementine's happiness, it was, as I have said, on my return from Spain and my fortunes were at a low ebb. I went to see what I could do in Leghorn and, as I went through Lombardy I passed within four miles of the estate where she and her husband resided, but I had not the courage to go and see her, perhaps I was right. But I must return to the thread of my story.

I felt grateful to Eleanore for her kindness to us and I resolved to leave her some memorial of me. I took her aside for a moment and, drawing off my finger a fine cameo representing the God of Silence, I

placed it on hers and then rejoined the company, without giving her an opportunity to thank me.

The carriage was ready to take me away and everyone was waiting to see me off, but my eyes filled with tears. I sought for Clementine in vain; she had vanished. I pretended to have forgotten something in my room and, going to my Hebe chamber, I found her in a terrible state, choking with sobs. I pressed her to my breast and mingled my tears with hers, and then, laying her gently in her bed and snatching a last kiss from her trembling lips, I tore myself away from a place full of such sweet and agonising memories.

I thanked and embraced everyone, the good canon amongst others, and, whispering to Eleanore to see to her sister, I jumped into the carriage beside the count. We remained perfectly silent and slept nearly the whole of the way. We found the Marquis Triulzi and the countess together and the former immediately sent for a dinner for four.

I was not much astonished to find that the countess had found out about our having come to Milan and at first she seemed inclined to let us feel the weight of her anger; but the count, always fertile in expedients, told her it was delicacy on my part not to tell her, as I was afraid she would be put out with such an incursion of visitors.

At dinner I said that I should soon be leaving for Genoa and, to my sorrow, the marquis gave me a letter of introduction to the notorious Signora Isola-Bella, while the countess gave me a letter to her kinsman, the Bishop of Tortona.

My arrival at Milan was well timed; Thérèse was on the point of going to Palermo and I just succeeded in seeing her before she left. I talked to her of Cesarino's wish to go to sea and I did all in my power to make her yield to his inclinations.

"I am leaving him in Milan," said she. "I know how he got this idea into his head, but I will never give my consent. I hope I shall find him wiser by the time I come back."

She was mistaken. My son never altered his mind and in fifteen years my readers will hear more of him.

I settled my accounts with Greppi and got two bills of exchange on Marseilles and one of ten thousand francs on Genoa, where I did not think I would have to spend much money. In spite of my luck at play, I was poorer by a thousand sequins when I left Milan than when I came there; but my extravagant expenditure must be taken into account.

I spent all my afternoons with the fair Marchioness Q—, sometimes alone and sometimes with her cousin, but, with my mind full of grief for Clementine, she no longer charmed me as she had done three weeks before.

I had no need to make any mystery about the young lady I was going to take with me, so I sent Clairmont for her small trunk and at eight o'clock on the morning of my departure she waited on me at the count's.

I kissed the hand of the woman who had attempted my life, and

thanked her for her hospitality, to which I attributed the good reception I had had in Milan. I then thanked the count, who said once more that he should never cease to be grateful to me, and thus I left Milan on the twentieth of March, 1763. I never re-visited that splendid capital.

The young lady, whom out of respect for her and her family I will call Crosin, was charming. There was an air of nobility and high-bred reserve about her which bore witness to her excellent upbringing. As I sat next to her, I congratulated myself on my immunity from love of her, but the reader will guess that I was mistaken. I told Clairmont that she was to be called my niece and to be treated with the utmost respect.

I had had no opportunity of conversing with her, so the first thing I did was to test her intelligence and, though I had not the slightest intention of paying my court to her, I felt that it would be well to inspire her with friendship and confidence as far as I was concerned.

The scar which my late amours had left was still bleeding and I was glad to think that I should be able to restore the young Marseillaise to the paternal hearth without any painful partings or vain regrets. I enjoyed in advance my meritorious actions and was quite vain to see my self-restraint come to such a pitch that I was able to live in close intimacy with a pretty girl without any other desire than that of rescuing her from the shame into which she might have fallen if she had travelled alone. She felt my kindness to her and said, "I am sure M. de la Croix would not have abandoned me if he had not met you in Milan."

"You are very charitable, but I am unable to share in your good opinion. To my mind, Croce has behaved in a rascally manner, to say the least of it, for, in spite of your many charms, he had no right to count on me in the matter. I will not say that he openly scorned you, since he may have acted from despair; but I am sure he must have ceased to love you or he could never have abandoned you thus."

"I am sure of the contrary. He saw that he had no means of providing for me and he had to choose between leaving me and killing himself."

"Not at all. He ought to have sold all he had and sent you back to Marseilles. Your journey to Genoa would not have cost much and from thence you could have gone to Marseilles by sea. Croce counted on my having been interested by your pretty face and he was right, but you must see that he exposed you to a great risk. You must not be offended if I tell the plain truth. If your face had not inspired me to a lively interest in you, I should have felt only ordinary compassion on reading your appeal and this would not have been enough to force me to great sacrifices of time and trouble. But I have no business to be blaming Croce. You are hurt; I see you are still in love with him."

"I confess it and I pity him. As for me, I complain only of my cruel destiny. I shall never see him again, but I shall never love anyone else, for my mind is made up. I shall go into a convent and expiate

my sins. My father will pardon me, for he is a man of excellent heart. I have been the victim of love; my will was not my own. The seductive influence of passion ravished my reason from me and the only thing that I blame myself for is for not having fortified my mind against it. Otherwise, I cannot see that I have sinned deeply, but I confess I have done wrong."

"You would have gone with Croce from Milan if he had asked you, even on foot?"

"Of course; it would have been my duty; but he would not expose me to the misery that he saw before us."

"Nay, you were miserable enough already. I am sure that, if you meet him in Marseilles, you will go with him again."

"Never. I am beginning to get back my reason. I am free once more and the day will come when I shall thank God for having forgotten him."

Her sincerity pleased me and, as I knew too well the power of love, I pitied her from my heart. For two hours she told me the history of her unfortunate amour and, as she told it well, I began to take a liking to her.

We reached Tortona in the evening and, with the intention of sleeping there, I told Clairmont to get us a supper to my taste. While we were eating it, I was astonished at my false niece's wit and she made a good match for me at the meal, for she had an excellent appetite and drank as well as any girl of her age. As we were leaving the table, she made a jest which was so much to the point that I burst out laughing and her conquest was complete. I embraced her in the joy of my heart and, finding my kiss ardently returned, I asked her without any circumlocution if she was willing that we should content ourselves with one bed.

At this invitation her face fell and she replied with that air of submission which kills desire:

"Alas! you can do what you like. If liberty is a precious thing, it is most precious of all in love."

"There is no need for this obedience. You have inspired me with a tender passion but, if you don't share my feelings, my love for you shall be stifled at its birth. There are two beds here, as you see; you can choose which one you will sleep in."

"Then I will sleep in that one, but I shall be very sorry if you are not so kind to me in future as you have been in the past."

"Don't be afraid. You shall not find me unworthy of your esteem. Good night; let us be good friends."

Her bed was hidden from sight by a screen. She wished me good night and then went to bed in perfect confidence, undressing completely, as I learned from her a few days thereafter.

Early the next morning I sent the countess's letter to the bishop and an hour afterwards, as I was at breakfast, an old priest came to ask me and the lady with me to dine with my lord. The countess's letter did not say anything about a lady, but the prelate, who was a

true Spaniard and very polite, felt that, as I could not leave my real or false niece alone in the inn, I would not have accepted the invitation if she had not been asked as well. Probably my lord had heard of the lady through his footmen, who in Italy are a sort of spies who entertain their masters with the scandalous gossip of the place. A bishop wants something more than his breviary to muse him, now that the apostolic virtues have grown old-fashioned and out of date. In short, I accepted the invitation, charging the priest to present my respects to his lordship.

My niece was delightful and treated me as if I had no right to feel any resentment for her having preferred her own bed to mine. I was pleased with her behaviour, for, now that my head was cool, I felt that she would have degraded herself if she had acted otherwise. My vanity was not even wounded, which is so often the case under similar circumstances. Self-love and prejudice prevent a woman yielding till she has been assiduously courted, whereas I had asked her to share my bed in an offhand manner, as if it were a mere matter of form. However, I should not have done it had it not been for the fumes of the champagne and the Pommard with which we had washed down the delicious supper mine host had supplied us with. She had been flattered by the bishop's invitation, but she did not know whether I had accepted for her as well as myself; and, when I told her that we were going out to dinner together, she was wild with joy. She made a careful toilette, looking very well for a traveller, and at noon my lord's carriage came to fetch us.

The prelate was a tall man, two inches taller than myself, and, in spite of the weight of his eighty years, he looked well and seemed quite active, though grave, as became a Spanish grandee. He received us with a politeness which was almost French, and, when my niece would have kissed his hand, according to custom, he affectionately drew it back and gave her a magnificent cross of amethysts and brilliants to kiss. She kissed it with devotion, saying, "This is what I love."

She looked at me as she said it, and the jest (which referred to her lover, La Croix or Croce) surprised me.

We sat down to dinner and I found the bishop to be a pleasant and learned man. We were nine in all—four priests and two young gentlemen of the town, who behaved to my niece with great politeness, which she received with all the manner of good society. I noticed that the bishop, though he often spoke to her, never once looked at her face. My lord knew what danger lurked in those bright eyes and, like a prudent greybeard, he took care not to fall into the snare. After coffee had been served, we took leave and in four hours we left Tortona, intending to lie at Novi.

In the course of the afternoon my fair niece amused me with the wit and wisdom of her conversation. While we were supping, I led the conversation up to the bishop and then to religion, that I might see what her principles were. Finding her to be a good Christian, I

asked her how she could allow herself to make such a jest as she kissed the prelate's cross.

"It was mere chance," she said. "The pun was innocent because it was not premeditated, for, if I had thought it over, I should never have said such a thing."

I pretended to believe her; she might possibly be sincere. She was extremely clever and my love for her was becoming more and more ardent, but my vanity kept my passions in check. When she went to bed, I did not kiss her, but, as her bed had no screen as at Tortona, she waited to undress till she thought I was asleep. We got to Genoa by noon the next day. Pogomas had got me some rooms and had forwarded me the address. I visited it and found the apartment to consist of four well-furnished rooms, thoroughly "comfortable," as the English, who understand how to take their ease, call it. I ordered a good dinner and sent to tell Pogomas of my arrival.

CHAPTER 99

At Genoa, where he was known to all, Pogomas called himself Posano. He introduced me to his wife and daughter, but they were so ugly and disgusting in every respect that I left them on some trifling pretext and went to dine with my new niece. Afterwards I went to see the Marquis Grimaldi, for I longed to know what had become of Rosalie. The marquis was away in Venice and was not expected back till the end of April, but one of his servants took me to see Rosalie, who had become Madame Paretti six months after my departure.

My heart beat fast as I entered the abode of this woman, of whom I had such pleasant recollections. I first went to M. Paretti in his shop and he received me with a joyful smile, which showed me how happy he was. He took me directly to his wife, who cried out with delight and ran to embrace me.

M. Paretti was busy and begged me to excuse him, saying his wife would entertain me.

Rosalie showed me a pretty little girl six months old, telling me that she was happy, loved her husband and was loved by him, that he was industrious and active in business and, under the patronage of the Marquis Grimaldi, had prospered exceedingly.

The peaceful happiness of marriage had improved her wonderfully; she had become a perfect beauty in every sense of the word.

"My dear friend," she said, "you are very good to call on me directly you arrive, and I hope you will dine with us to-morrow. I owe all my happiness to you and that is even a sweeter thought than the recollection of the passionate hours we spent together. Let us kiss, but no more; my duty as an honest wife forbids me from going any further, so do not disturb the happiness you have given."

I pressed her hand tenderly, to show that I assented to the conditions she laid down.

"Oh! by the way," she suddenly exclaimed, "I have a pleasant surprise for you."

She went out and a moment after returned with Véronique, who had become her maid. I was glad to see her and embraced her affectionately, asking after Annette. She said her sister was well and was working with her mother.

"I want her to come and wait on my niece while we are here," said I.

At this, Rosalie burst out laughing.

"What! another niece? You have a great many relatives! But, as she is your niece, I hope you will bring her with you to-morrow."

"Certainly and all the more willingly as she is from Marseilles."

"From Marseilles? Why, we might know each other. Not that that would matter, for all your nieces are discreet young persons. What is her name?"

"Crosin."

"I don't know it."

"I daresay you don't. She is the daughter of a cousin of mine who lived in Marseilles."

"Tell that to someone else; but, after all, what does it matter? You choose well, amuse yourself and make them happy. It may be wisdom after all and at any rate I congratulate you. I shall be delighted to see your niece; but, if she knows me, you must see that she knows her part as well."

On leaving Madame Parette, I call on Signora Isola-Bella and gave her the Marquis Triulzi's letter. Soon after she came into the room and welcomed me, saying that she had been expecting me, as Triulzi had written to her on the subject. She introduced me to the Marquis Agostino Grimaldi della Pietra, her *cicisbeo-in-chief* during the long absence of her husband, who was living in Lisbon.

The signora's apartments were very elegant. She was pretty, with small though regular features; her manner was pleasant, her voice sweet and her figure well shaped, though too thin. She was nearly thirty. I say nothing of her complexion, for her face was plastered with white and red, and so coarsely that these patches of paint were the first things that caught my attention. I was disgusted at this, in spite of her fine, expressive eyes. After an hour spent in question and reply, in which both parties were feeling their way, I accepted her invitation to come to supper the following day.

When I got back, I complimented my niece on the way in which she had arranged her room, separated from mine only by a small closet, which I intended for her maid, who, I told her, was coming the next day. She was highly pleased with this attention and it paved the way for my success. I also told her that the next day she was to dine with me at a substantial merchant's as my niece, and this piece of news made her quite happy.

This girl, whom Croce had infatuated and deprived of her senses, was exquisitely beautiful, but more charming than all her physical

beauties were the nobleness of her presence and the sweetness of her disposition. I was already madly in love with her and repented not having taken possession of her on the first day of our journey. If I had taken her at her word, I should have been a steadfast lover and I do not think it would have taken me long to make her forget her former admirer.

I had eaten but a light dinner, so I sat down to supper famished; and, as my niece had an excellent appetite, we prepared for enjoyment, but, instead of the dishes being delicate, as we had expected, they were detestable. I told Clairmont to send for the landlady and she said she could not help it, as everything had been done by my own cook.

"My cook?" I repeated.

"Yes, sir; the one your secretary, M. Possano, engaged for you. I could have got a much better one and a much cheaper one myself."

"Get one to-morrow."

"Certainly, but you must rid yourself and me of the present cook, for he has taken up his position here with his wife and children. Tell Possano to send him away."

"I will do so and in the meanwhile get me a fresh cook. I will try him the day after to-morrow."

I escorted my niece to her room and begged her to go to bed without troubling about me; and, so saying, I took up the paper and began to read it. When I had finished, I went up to the bed and said, "You might spare me the pain of having to sleep by myself."

She lowered her eyes but said nothing, so I gave her a kiss and left her.

In the morning my fair niece came into my room just as Clairmont was washing my feet, and begged me to let her have some coffee, as chocolate made her too warm. I told my man to go and fetch some coffee and, as soon as he was gone, she went down on her knees and would have wiped my feet.

"I cannot allow that, my dear young lady."

"Why not? It is a mark of friendship."

"That may be, but such marks cannot be given to anyone but your lover without your degrading yourself."

She got up and sat down on a chair, saying nothing.

Clairmont came back and I proceeded with my toilette.

The landlady came in with our breakfast and asked my niece if she would like to buy a fine silk shawl made in the Genoese fashion. I did not let her be embarrassed by having to answer, but told the landlady to let us see it. Soon after the milliner came in, but by that time I had given my young friend twenty Genoese sequins, telling her she might use them for her private wants. She took the money, thanking me with much grace and letting me imprint a delicious kiss on her lovely lips.

I had sent away the milliner after having bought the shawl when

Possano took it upon himself to remonstrate with me in the matter of the cook.

"I engaged the man by your orders," said he, "for the whole time you stayed in Genoa, at four francs a day, with board and lodging."

"Where is my letter?"

"Here it is: 'Get me a good cook; I will keep him while I stay in Genoa.'"

"Perhaps you did not remark the expression, 'a good cook'? Well, this fellow is a very bad cook; and, at all events, I am the best judge whether he is good or bad."

"You are wrong, for the man will prove his skill. He will cite you in the law courts and win his case."

"Then you made a formal agreement with him?"

"Certainly; and your letter authorised me to do so."

"Tell him to come up; I want to speak to him."

While Possano was downstairs, I told Clairmont to go and fetch me an advocate. The cook came upstairs, I read the agreement and saw it was worded in such a manner that I should be in the wrong legally, but I did not change my mind for all that.

"Sir," said the cook, "I am skilled in my business and I can get four thousand Genoese to swear as much."

"That doesn't say much for their good taste; but, whatever they may say, the execrable supper you gave me last night proves that you are fit only to keep a low eating-house."

As there is nothing more irritable than the feelings of a culinary artist, I was expecting a sharp answer, but just then the advocate came in. He had heard the end of our dialogue and told me that, not only would the man find plenty of witnesses to his skill, but I should find very great difficulty in getting anybody at all to swear to his want of skill.

"That may be," I replied, "but, as I stick to my own opinion and think his cooking horrible, he must go, for I want to get another and I will pay that fellow as if he had served me the whole time."

"That won't do," said the cook. "I will summon you before the judge and demand damages for defamation of character."

At this, my bile overpowered me and I was going to seize him and throw him out of the window when Don Antonio Grimaldi came in. When he heard what was the matter, he laughed and said, with a shrug of his shoulders:

"My dear sir, you had better not go into court or you will be mulcted in costs, for the evidence is against you. Probably this man makes a slight mistake in believing himself to be an excellent cook, but the chief mistake is in the agreement, which ought to have stipulated that he should cook a trial dinner. The person who drew up the agreement is either a great knave or a great fool."

At this, Possano struck in his rude way and told the nobleman that he was neither knave nor fool.

"But you are cousin to the cook," said the landlady.

This timely remark solved the mystery. I paid and dismissed the advocate and, having sent the cook out of the room, I said, "Do I owe you any money, Passano?"

"On the contrary, you paid me a month in advance and there are ten more days of the month to run."

"I will make you a present of the ten days and send you away this very moment if your cousin does not leave my house to-day and give you back the foolish engagement which you signed in my name."

"That's what I call cutting the Gordian knot," said M. Grimaldi.

He then begged me to introduce him to the lady he had seen with me and I did so, telling him she was my niece.

"Signora Isola-Bella will be delighted to see her."

"As the marquis did not mention her in his letters, I did not take the liberty of bringing her."

The marquis left a few moments afterwards and soon after Annette came in with her mother. The girl had developed in an incredible manner while I was away. Her cheeks blossomed like the rose, her teeth were white as pearls and her breasts, though modestly concealed from view, were exquisitely rounded. I presented her to her mistress, whose astonishment amused me.

Annette, who looked pleased to be in my service again, went to dress her new mistress and, after giving a few sequins to the mother, I sent her away and proceeded to make my toilette.

Towards noon, just as I was going out with my niece to dine at Rosalie's, my landlady brought me the agreement Passano had made and introduced the new cook. I ordered the next day's dinner and went away much pleased with my comic victory.

A brilliant company awaited us at the Paretti's, but I was agreeably surprised on introducing my niece to Rosalie to see them recognise each other. They called each other by their respective names and indulged in an affectionate embrace. After this they retired to another room for a quarter of an hour and returned looking very happy. Just then Paretti entered and, on Rosalie introducing him to my niece under her true name, he welcomed her in the most cordial manner. Her father was a correspondent of his and, drawing from his pocket a letter he had just received from him, he gave it to her to read. My niece read it eagerly, with tears in her eyes, and gave the signature a respectful pressure with her lips. This expression of filial love, which displayed all the feelings of her heart, moved me to such an extent that I burst into tears. Then, taking Rosalie aside, I begged her to ask her husband not to mention to his correspondent the fact that he had seen his daughter.

The dinner was excellent and Rosalie did the honours with that grace which was natural to her. However, the guests did not by any means pay her all their attention, the greater portion of which was diverted in the direction of my supposed niece. Her father, a prosperous merchant of Marseilles, was well known in the commercial circles of Genoa and besides this her wit and beauty captivated everybody and one young gentleman fell madly in love with her. He was an extremely

good match and proved to be the husband Heaven had destined for my charming friend. What a happy thought it was for me that I had been the means of rescuing her from the gulf of shame, misery and despair and placing her on the high road to happiness. I own that I have always felt a keener pleasure in doing good than anything else, though perhaps I may not always have done good from strictly disinterested motives.

When we rose from the table in excellent humour with ourselves and our surroundings, cards were proposed and Rosalie, who knew my likings, said it must be *trente-quarante*. This was agreed to and we played till supper, nobody either winning or losing to any extent. We did not go till midnight, after having spent a very happy day.

When we were in our room, I asked my niece how she had known Rosalie

"I knew her at home; she and her mother used to bring the wash. I always liked her."

"You must be nearly the same age."

"She is two years older than I. I recognised her directly."

"What did she tell you?"

"That it was you who took her away from Marseilles and made her fortune."

"She did not make you the depositary of any other confidences?"

"No, but there are some things which don't need telling."

"You are right. And what did you tell her?"

"Only what she could have guessed for herself. I told her that you were not my uncle and, if she thinks you are my lover, I am not sorry. You do not know how I have enjoyed myself to-day! You must have been born to make me happy."

"But how about La Croix?"

"For heaven's sake, say nothing about him!"

This conversation increased my ardour. She called Annette and I went to my room.

As I had expected, Annette came to me as soon as her mistress was in bed

"If the lady is really your niece," said she, "may I hope that you still love me?"

"Assuredly, dear Annette, I shall always love you. Let us have a little talk."

Next morning Possano came to tell me he had arranged matters with the cook with the help of six sequins. I gave him the money and told him to be more careful in future.

I went to Rosalie's for my breakfast, which she was delighted to give me, and I asked her and her husband to dinner on the following day, telling her to bring any four persons she liked.

"Your decision," said I, "will decide the fate of my cook; it will be his trial dinner."

She promised to come and then pressed me to tell her the history of my amours with her fair countrywoman.

"Alas!" I said, "you may not believe me, but I assure you I am only beginning with her."

"I shall certainly believe you if you tell me so, though it seems very strange."

"Strange but true. You must understand, however, that I have known her only a very short time; and, moreover, I could not be made happy save through love, mere submission would kill me."

"Good! but what did she say of me?"

I gave her a report of the whole conversation I had had with my niece the night before, and she was delighted.

"As you have not yet gone far with your niece, would you object if the young man who showed her so much attention yesterday were of the party to-morrow?"

"Who is he? I should like to know him."

"M. N—, the only son of a rich merchant."

"By all means, bring him with you."

When I got home, I went to my niece, who was still in bed, and told her that her fellow countryman would dine with us on the morrow. I comforted her with the assurance that M. Paretti would not tell her father she was in Genoa. She had been a good deal tormented with the idea that the merchant would inform her father of all.

As I was going out to supper, I told her she could go and sup with Rosalie or take supper at home if she preferred it.

"You are too kind to me, my dear uncle. I will go to Rosalie's."

"Very good. Are you satisfied with Annette?"

"Oh! by the way, she told me that you spent last night with her and that you were her lover and her sister's at the same time."

"It is true, but she is very indiscreet to say anything about it."

"We must forgive her, though. She told me she consented to sleep with you only on the assurance that I was really your niece. I am sure she made this confession only out of vanity and in the hope of gaining my favour, which would naturally be bestowed on a woman you love."

"I wish you had the right to be jealous of her; and I swear that, if she does not comport herself with the utmost obedience to you in every respect, I will send her packing, in spite of our relations. As for you, you may not be able to love me and I have no right to complain, but I will not have you degrade yourself by becoming my submissive victim."

I was not sorry for my niece to know that I made use of Annette, but my vanity was wounded at the way she took it. It was plain that she was not at all in love with me and was glad there was a safeguard in the person of her maid and that thus we could be together without danger, for she could not be ignorant of the power of her charms.

We dined together and it augured well for the new cook's skill. M. Paretti had promised to get me a good man and he presented himself just as we were finishing dinner and I made a present of him to my niece. We went for a drive together and I left my niece at Rosalie's and then repaired to Isola-Bella's, where I found a numerous and brilliant company had assembled, consisting of all the best people in Genoa.

Just then all the great ladies were mad over *biribi*, a regular cheating game. It was strictly forbidden in Genoa, but this only made it more popular and, besides, the prohibition had no force in private houses, which are outside of the jurisdiction of the Government; in short, I found the game in full swing at Signora Isola-Bella's. The professional gamesters who kept the bank went from house to house and the amateurs were advised of their presence at such-and-such a house at such-and-such an hour.

Although I detested the game, I began to play, in order to do as the others did.

In the room there was a portrait of the mistress of the house in harlequin costume and there happened to be the same picture on one of the divisions of the *biribi* table. I chose this one out of politeness and did not play on any other. I risked a sequin each time. The board had thirty-six compartments and, if one lost, one paid thirty-two times the amount of the stake; this, of course, was an enormous advantage for the bank.

Each player drew three numbers in succession and there were three professionals; one kept the bag, another the bank and the third the board, while the last took care to gather in the winnings as soon as the result was known. The bank amounted to some two thousand sequins or thereabouts. The table, the cloth and four silver candlesticks belonged to the players.

I sat at the left of Signora Isola-Bella, who began to play and, as there were fifteen or sixteen of us, I had lost about fifty sequins when my turn came, for my harlequin had not appeared once. Everybody pitied me—or pretended to do so, for selfishness is the predominant passion of gamesters.

My turn came at last. I drew my harlequin and received thirty-two sequins. I left them on the same figure and got a thousand sequins. I left fifty still on the board and the harlequin came out for the third time. The bank was broken and the table, the cloth, the candlesticks and the board all belonged to me. Everyone congratulated me and the wretched bankrupt gamesters were hissed, hooted and turned out of doors.

After the first transports were over, I saw that the ladies were in distress; for, as there could be no more gaming, they did not know what to do. I consoled them by declaring that I would be banker, but with equal stakes, and that I would pay winning cards thirty-six times the stakes instead of thirty-two. This was pronounced charming of me and I amused everybody till supper-time without any great losses or gains on either side. By dint of entreaty I made the lady of the house accept the whole concern as a present, and a very handsome one it was.

The supper was pleasant enough and my success at play was the chief topic of conversation. Before leaving I asked Signora Isola-Bella and her marquis to dine with me and they eagerly accepted the invita-

tion. When I got home, I went to see my niece, who told me she had spent a delightful evening.

"A very pleasant young man," said she, "who is coming to dine with us to-morrow, paid me great attention."

"The same, I suppose, as did so yesterday?"

"Yes. Amongst other pretty things he told me that, if I liked, he would go to Marseilles and ask my hand of my father. I said nothing but thought to myself that, if the poor young man gave himself all this trouble, he would be woefully misled, as he would not see me."

"Why not?"

"Because I should be in a nunnery. My kind, good father will forgive me, but I must punish myself."

"That is a sad design, which I hope you will abandon. You have all that would make the happiness of a worthy husband. The more I think it over, the more I am convinced of the truth of what I say."

We said no more just then, for she needed rest. Annette came to undress her and I was glad to see the kindness of my niece towards her, but the coolness with which the girl behaved to her mistress did not escape my notice. As soon as she came to sleep with me, I gently remonstrated with her, bidding her do her duty better for the future. Instead of answering with a caress, as she ought to have done, she began to cry.

"My dear child," said I, "your tears weary me. You are here only to amuse me and, if you can't do that, you had better go."

This hurt her foolish feelings of vanity and she got up and went away without a word, leaving me to go to sleep in a very bad temper.

In the morning I told her in a stern voice that, if she played me such a trick again, I would send her away. Instead of trying to soothe me with a kiss, the little rebel burst out crying again. I sent her out of the room impatiently and proceeded to count my gains of the previous evening.

I thought no more about it, but presently my niece came in and asked me why I had vexed poor Annette.

"My dear niece," said I, "tell her to behave better or else I will send her back to her mother's."

She gave me no reply, but took a handful of silver and fled. I had not time to reflect on this singular conduct, for Annette came in rattling her crowns in her pocket and promised, with a kiss, not to make me angry any more.

Such was my niece. She knew I adored her and she loved me, but she did not want me to be her lover, though she made use of the ascendancy which my passion gave her. In the code of feminine coquetry such cases are numerous.

Possano came uninvited to see me and congratulated me on my victory of the evening before.

"Who told you about it?"

"I have just been at the coffee-house, where everybody is talking of it. It was a wonderful victory, for those *biribanti* are knaves of the first water. Your adventure is making a great noise, for everyone says that

you could not have broken their bank unless you had made an agreement with the man that kept the bag."

"My dear fellow, I am tired of you. Here, take this piece of money for your wife and be off."

The piece of money I had given him was a gold coin worth a hundred Genoese livres, which the Government had struck for internal commerce; there were also pieces of fifty and twenty-five livres.

I was going on with my calculations when Clairmont brought me a note. It was from Irene and contained a tender invitation to breakfast with her. I did not know that she was in Genoa and the news gave me very great pleasure. I locked up my money, dressed in haste and started out to see her. I found her in good, well-furnished rooms and her old father, Count Rinaldi, embraced me with tears of joy.

After the ordinary compliments had been passed, the old man proceeded to congratulate me on my winnings of the night before.

"Three thousand sequins!" he exclaimed. "That is a grand haul indeed."

"Quite so."

"The funny part of it is that the man who keeps the bag is in the pay of the others."

"What strikes you as funny in that?"

"Why, he gained half without any risk, otherwise he would not have been likely to have entered into an agreement with you."

"You think, then, that it was a case of connivance?"

"Everybody says so; indeed, what else could it be? The rascal has made his fortune without running any risk. All the Greeks in Genoa are applauding him and praising you."

"As the greater rascal of the two?"

"They don't call you a rascal; they say you're a great genius; you are praised and envied."

"I am sure I ought to be obliged to them."

"I heard it all from a gentleman who was there. He says that the second and third time the man with the bag gave you the office."

"And you believe this?"

"I am sure of it. No man of honour in your position could have acted otherwise. However, when you come to settle up with the fellow, I advise you to be very careful, for there will be spies on your tracks. If you like, I will do the business for you."

I had enough self-restraint to repress the indignation and rage I felt. Without a word, I took my hat and marched out of the room, sternly repulsing Irene, who tried to prevent me from going, as she had done once before. I resolved not to have anything more to do with the wretched old count.

This calumnious report vexed me extremely, although I knew that most gamblers would consider it an honour. Possano and Rinaldi had said enough to show me that all the town was talking about it and I was not surprised that everyone believed it; but for my part I did not care to be taken for a rogue when I had acted honourably.

I felt the need of unbosoming myself to someone and walked towards the Strada Balbi to call on the Marquis Grimaldi and discuss the matter with him. I was told he was gone to the courts, so I followed him there and was ushered into a vast hall, where he waited on me. I told him my story and he said, "My dear chevalier, you ought to laugh at it and I should not advise you to take the trouble to refute the calumny."

"Then you advise me to confess openly that I am a rogue?"

"No, for only fools will think that of you. Despise them unless they tell you you are a rogue to your face."

"I should like to know the name of the nobleman who was present and sent this report about the town."

"I do not know who it is. He was wrong to say anything, but you would be equally wrong in taking any steps against him, for I am sure he did not tell the story with any intention of giving offence—quite the contrary."

"I am lost in wonder at his course of reasoning. Let us suppose that the facts were as he told them; do you think they are to my honour?"

"Neither to your honour nor to your shame. Such are the morals and such the maxims of gamesters. The story will be laughed at, your skill will be applauded and you will be admired, for each one will say that in your place he would have done likewise."

"Would you?"

"Certainly. If I had been at all sure that the ball would go to the harlequin, I would have broken the bank, as you did. I will say honestly that I do not know whether you won by luck or by skill, but the most probable hypothesis, to my mind, is that you knew the direction of the ball. You must confess that there is something to be said in favour of the supposition."

"I confess that there is, but it is none the less a dishonourable imputation against me and you in your turn must confess that those who think that I won by sleight of hand or by an agreement with a rascal insult me grievously."

"That depends on the way you look at it. I confess they insult you if you think yourself insulted; but they are not aware of that and, their intention being quite different, there is no insult at all in the matter. I promise you no one will tell you to your face that you cheated, but how are you going to prevent them thinking so?"

"Well, let them think what they like, but let them take care not to tell me their thoughts."

I went home angry with Grimaldi, Rinaldi and everyone else. My anger vexed me; I should properly have only laughed, for in the state of morals in Genoa, the accusation, whether true or false, could not injure my honour. On the contrary I gained by it a reputation for being a genius, a term which the Genoese prefer to that Jansenist word, "a rogue," though the meaning is the same. Finally I was astonished to find myself reflecting that I should have had no scruple in breaking the bank in the way suggested even if it had only been for the sake of

making the company laugh. What vexed me most was that I was credited with an exploit I had not performed.

When dinner-time drew near, I endeavoured to overcome my ill temper for the sake of the company I was going to receive. My niece was adorned only with her native charms, for the rascal Croce had sold all her jewels, but she was elegantly dressed and her beautiful hair was more precious than a crown of rubies.

Rosalie came in richly dressed and looking very lovely. Her husband, her uncle and her aunt were with her and also two friends, one of whom was the aspirant for the hand of my niece.

Madame Isola-Bella and her shadow, M. Grimaldi, came late, like great people.

Just as we were going to sit down, Clairmont told me that a man wanted to speak to me.

"Show him in."

As soon as he appeared, M. Grimaldi exclaimed, "The man with the bag!"

"What do you want?" I said sharply.

"Sir, I am come to ask you to help me. I am a family man and it is thought that . . ."

I did not let him finish.

"I have never refused to aid the unfortunate," said I. "Clairmont, give him ten sequins. Leave the room."

This incident spoke in my favour and put me in a better temper.

We sat down to table and a letter was handed to me. I recognised Possano's writing and put it in my pocket without reading it.

The dinner was delicious and my cook was pronounced to have won his spurs. Though her exalted rank and the brilliance of her attire gave Signora Isola-Bella the first place of right, she was nevertheless eclipsed by my two nieces. The young Genoese was all attention for the fair Marseillaise and I could see that she was not displeased. I sincerely wished to see her in love with someone and I liked her too well to bear the idea of her burying herself in a convent. She could never be happy till she found someone who would make her forget the rascal who had brought her to the brink of ruin.

I seized the opportunity, when all my guests were engaged with each other, to open Possano's letter. It ran as follows:

"I went to the bank to change the piece of gold you gave me. It was weighed and found to be ten carats under weight. I was told to name the person from whom I got it, but of course I did not do so. I then had to go to prison and, if you do not get me out of the scrape, I shall be prosecuted, though of course I am not going to get myself hanged for anybody."

I gave the letter to Grimaldi and, when we had left the table, he took me aside and said, "This is a very serious matter, for it may end in the gallows for the man who clipped the coin."

"Then they can hang the *biribanti*! That won't hurt me much."

"No, that won't do; it would compromise Madame Isola-Bella, as

biribi is strictly forbidden. Leave it all to me, I will speak to the State Inquisitors about it. Tell Possano to persevere in his silence and that you will see him safely through. The laws against coiners and clippers are severe only with regard to these particular coins, as the Government has special reasons for not wishing them to be depreciated."

I wrote to Possano and sent for a pair of scales. We weighed the gold I had won at *biribi* and every single piece had been clipped. M. Grimaldi said he would have them defaced and sold to a jeweller.

When we got back to the dining-room, we found everybody at play. M. Grimaldi proposed that I should play at *quinze* with him. I detested the game but, as he was my guest, I felt it would be impolite to refuse and in four hours I had lost five hundred sequins.

Next morning the marquis told me that Possano was out of prison and had been given the value of the coin. He also handed over to me thirteen hundred sequins which had resulted from the sale of the gold. We agreed that I was to call on Madame Isola-Bella the next day, when he would give me my revenge at *quinze*.

I kept the appointment and lost three thousand sequins. I paid him a thousand the next day and gave him two bills of exchange, payable by myself, for the other two thousand. When these bills were presented, I was in England and, being badly off, I had to let them go to protest. Five years later, when I was in Barcelona, M. Grimaldi was urged by a traitor to have me imprisoned, but he knew enough of me to be sure that, if I did not meet the bills, it was from sheer inability to do so. He even wrote me a very polite letter, in which he gave the name of my enemy, assuring me that he would never take any steps to compel me to pay the money. This enemy was Possano, who was also in Barcelona, though I was not aware of his presence. I will speak of the circumstances in due time, but I cannot help remarking that all who aided me in my pranks with Madame d'Urfé proved traitors, with the exception of a Venetian girl, whose acquaintance the reader will make in the following chapter.

In spite of my losses, I enjoyed myself and had plenty of money, for, after all, I had lost only what I had won at *biribi*. Rosalie often dined with us, either alone or with her husband, and I supped regularly at her home with my niece, whose love affair seemed quite promising. I congratulated her upon the circumstance, but she persisted in her determination to take refuge from the world in a cloister. Women often do the most idiotic things out of sheer obstinacy; possibly they deceive even themselves and act in good faith; but unfortunately, when the veil falls from their eyes, they see but the profound abyss into which their folly has plunged them.

In the meanwhile, my niece had become so friendly and familiar that she would often come and sit on my bed in the morning when Annette was still in my arms. She seemed to think that her charms would exercise no power over me. She was quite mistaken, but I was careful not to undeceive her for fear of losing her confidence. I watched

the game carefully and, noting how little by little her familiarity increased, I felt sure she would have to surrender at last, if not in Genoa, certainly on the journey, when we would be thrown constantly into each other's society with nobody to spy on our actions and with nothing else to do but make love. It is the weariness of a journey, the constant monotony, that makes one do something to make sure of one's existence; and, when it comes to the reckoning, there is usually more joy than repentance.

But the story of my journey from Genoa to Marseilles was written in the Book of Fate and could not be read by me. All I knew was that I must soon go, as Madame d'Urfé was waiting for me in the latter city. I knew not that in this journey would be involved the fate of a Venetian girl of whom I had never heard, who had never seen me but whom I was destined to render happy. My fate seemed to have made me stop in Genoa to wait for her.

I settled my accounts with the banker to whom I had been accredited and took a letter of credit on Marseilles, where, however, I was not likely to want for funds, as my high treasurer, Madame d'Urfé, was there. I took leave of Madame Isola-Bella and her circle, that I might be able to devote all my time to Rosalie and her friends.

CHAPTER 100

ON the Tuesday of Holy Week I was just getting up when Clairmont came to tell me that a priest who would not give his name wanted to speak to me. I went out in my nightcap and the rascally priest rushed at me and nearly choked me with his embraces. I did not like so much affection and, as I had not recognised him at first on account of the darkness of the room, I took him by the arm and led him to the window. It was my youngest brother, a good-for-nothing fellow whom I had always disliked. I had not seen him for ten years, but I cared so little about him that I had not even inquired whether he were alive or dead in the correspondence I maintained with M. de Bragadin, Dandolo and Barbaro.

As soon as his silly embraces were over, I coldly asked him what chance had brought him to Genoa in this disgusting state of dirt, rags and tatters. He was only twenty-nine, his complexion was fresh and healthy and he had a splendid head of hair. He was a posthumous son, born, like Mahomet, three months after the death of his father.

"The story of my misfortunes would be only too long. Take me into your room and I will sit down and tell you the whole story."

"First of all, answer my questions. How long have you been here?"

"Since yesterday."

"Who told you I was here?"

"Count B— in Milan."

"Who told you the count knew me?"

"I found out by chance. I was at M. de Bragadin's a month ago and saw on his table a letter from the count to you"

"Did you tell him you were my brother?"

"I had to when he said how much I resembled you."

"He made a mistake, for you are a blockhead."

"He did not think so at all events, for he asked me to dinner."

"You must have cut a pretty figure if you were in your present state."

"He gave me four sequins to come here; otherwise, I should never have been able to make the journey."

"Then he did a very foolish thing. You're a mere beggar then; you take alms. Why did you leave Venice? What do you want with me? I can do nothing for you."

"Ah! Do not make me despair or I shall kill myself."

"That's the very best thing you could do, but you are too great a coward. I ask again why you left Venice, where you could say mass and preach and make an honest living, like many priests much better than you?"

"That is the kernel of the whole matter. Let us go in and I will tell you."

"No; wait for me here. We will go somewhere so you can tell me your story if I have patience to listen to it. But don't tell any of my people that you are my brother, for I am ashamed to have such a relative. Come, take me to the place where you are staying."

"I must tell you that at my inn I am not alone, and I want to have a private interview with you."

"Who is with you?"

"I will tell you presently, but let us go into a coffee-house."

"Are you in company with a band of brigands? What are you sighing over?"

"I must confess it, however painful it may be to my feelings—I am with a woman."

"A woman! And you a priest!"

"Forgive me. I was blinded by love and seduced by my senses and her beauty, so I seduced her in turn, under a promise to marry her in Geneva. I can never go back to Venice, for I took her away from her father's house."

"What could you do in Geneva? They would expel you after you had been there three or four days. Come, we will go to the inn and see the woman you have deceived. I will talk with you afterwards"

I began to trace my steps in the direction he had pointed out, and he was obliged to follow me. As soon as we got to the inn, he went on in front and, after climbing three flights of stairs, I entered a wretched den, where I saw a tall young girl, a sweet brunette, who looked proud and not in the least embarrassed. As soon as I made my appearance, she said, without any greeting, "Are you the brother of this liar and monster who has deceived me so abominably?"

"Yes," said I. "I have that remarkable honour."

"A fine honour, truly. Well, have the kindness to send me back to Venice, for I won't stop any longer with this rascal, whom I listened to like the fool I was and who turned my head with his lying tales. He was going to meet you in Milan and you were to give us enough money to go to Geneva and there we were to turn Protestants and get married. He swore you were awaiting him in Milan, but you were not there at all and he contrived to get money in some way or other and brought me here miserably enough. I thank Heaven he has found you at last, for, if he had not, I should have started off by myself and begged my way. I have not a single thing left; the wretch sold all I possessed at Bergamo and Verona. I don't know how I have kept my senses through it all. To hear him talk, the world was a paradise outside Venice, but I have found to my cost that there is no place like home. I curse the hour when I first saw the miserable wretch. He's a beggarly knave, always whining. He wanted to enjoy his rights as my husband when we got to Padua, but I am thankful to say I gave him nothing. Here is the writing he gave me; take it and do what you like with it. But, if you have any heart, send me back to Venice or I will tramp there on foot."

I had listened to this long tirade without interrupting her. She might have spoken at much greater length, so far as I was concerned; my astonishment took my breath away. Her discourse had all the fire of eloquence and was heightened by her expressive face and the flaming glances she shot from her eyes.

My brother, sitting with his head between his hands and obliged to listen in silence to this long catalogue of well deserved reproaches, gave something of a comic element to the scene. In spite of that, however, I was much touched by the sad aspects of the girl's story. I felt at once that I must take charge of her and put an end to this ill-assorted match. I imagined that I should not have much difficulty in sending her back to Venice, which she might never have quitted if it had not been for her trust in me, founded on the fallacious promises of her seducer.

The true Venetian character of the girl struck me even more than her beauty. Her courage and frank indignation and the nobility of her manner made me resolve not to abandon her. I could not doubt that she had told a true tale, as my brother continued to observe a guilty silence.

I watched her silently for some time and, my mind being made up, said, "I promise to send you back to Venice with a respectable woman to look after you; but you will be unfortunate if you carry back with you the results of your amours."

"What results? Did I not tell you that we were going to be married in Geneva?"

"Yes, but in spite of that . . ."

"I understand you, sir, but I am quite at ease on that point, as I am happy to say that I did not yield to any of the wretch's desires."

"Remember," said the abbé, in a plaintive voice, "the oath you took to be mine forever. You swore it upon the crucifix."

So saying, he got up and approached her with a supplicating gesture, but, as soon as he was within reach, she gave him a good, hearty box on the ear. I expected to see a fight, in which I should not have interfered, but nothing of the kind. The humble abbé gently turned away to the window and, casting his eyes to Heaven, began to weep.

"You are quite a little devil, my dear," I said. "The poor fellow is unhappy only because you have made him fall in love with you."

"If he did, it's his own fault. I should never have thought of him but for his coming to me and fooling me. I shall never forgive him till he is out of my sight. That's not the first blow I have given him, I had to begin in Padua."

"Yes," said the abbé, "but you are excommunicated, for I am a priest."

"It's little I care for the excommunication of a scoundrel like you and, if you say another word, I will give you some more."

"Calm yourself, my child," said I. "You have cause to be angry, but you should not beat him. Take up your things and follow me."

"Where are you going to take her?" asked the foolish priest.

"To my own house and I should advise you to hold your tongue. Here, take these twenty sequins and buy yourself some clean clothes and linen and give those rags of yours to the beggars. I will come and talk to you to-morrow and you may thank your stars that you found me here. As for you, mademoiselle, I will have you conducted to my lodging, for Genoa must not see you in my company after arriving here with a priest. We must not have any scandal. I shall place you in the care of my landlady, but, whatever you do, don't tell her this sad story. I will see that you are properly dressed and that you want for nothing."

"May Heaven reward you!"

My brother, astonished at the sight of the twenty sequins, let me go away without a word. I had the fair Venetian taken to my lodging in a sedan-chair and, putting her in charge of my landlady, I told the latter to see that she was properly dressed. I wanted to see how she would look in decent clothes, for her present rags and tatters detracted from her appearance. I warned Annette that a girl who had been placed in my care would eat and sleep with her, and then, having to entertain a numerous company of guests, I proceeded to make my toilette.

Although my niece had no rights over me, I valued her esteem and thought it best to tell her the whole story, lest she should pass an unfavourable judgment on me. She listened attentively, thanked me for my confidence in her and said she should very much like to see the girl and the abbé, too, whom she pitied, though she admitted he was to be blamed for what he had done. I had had made for her a dress to wear at dinner which became her exquisitely. I felt only too happy to be able to please her in any way, for her conduct towards me and the way she treated her ardent lover commanded my admiration. She saw him every day either at my house or at Rosalie's. The young man had

received an excellent education, though he was of the mercantile class, and wrote to her in a businesslike manner that, as they were well suited to each other in every way, there was nothing against his going to Marseilles and obtaining her father's consent to the match, unless it were a feeling of aversion on her side. He finished by requesting her to give him an answer. She showed me the letter and I congratulated her, and advised her to accept, if there was nothing about the young man which displeased her.

"There is nothing of the kind," she said, "and Rosalie thinks as you do."

"Then tell him by word of mouth that you give your consent and will await him in Marseilles."

"Very good; since you think so, I will tell him to-morrow."

When dinner was over, a feeling of curiosity made me go into the room where Annette was dining with the Venetian girl, whose name was Marcoline. I was struck with astonishment on seeing her, for she was completely changed, not so much by the pretty dress she had on as by the contented expression of her face, which made her look quite another person. Good humour had vanquished unbecoming rage and the gentleness born of happiness made her features breathe forth love. I could scarcely believe that this charming creature before me was the same one who had dealt such a hard blow to my brother, a priest and a sacred being in the eyes of the common people. They were eating and laughing at not being able to understand each other, for Marcoline spoke only Venetian and Annette, Genoese, and the latter dialect does not resemble the former any more than Bohemian resembles Dutch.

I spoke to Marcoline in her native tongue, which was mine, too, and she said, "I seem to have suddenly passed from Hell to Paradise."

"Indeed, you look like an angel."

"You called me a little devil this morning. But here is a fair angel," said she, pointing to Annette. "We don't see such in Venice."

"She is my treasure."

Shortly after my niece came in and, seeing me talking and laughing with the two girls, began to look closely at the newcomer. She told me in French that she thought her perfectly beautiful and, repeating her opinion to the girl in Italian, she gave her a kiss. Marcoline asked her bluntly in the Venetian manner, who she was.

"I am this gentleman's niece and he is taking me back to Marseilles, where my home is."

"Then you would have been my niece, too, if I had married his brother. I wish I had such a pretty niece."

This pleasant rejoinder was followed by a storm of kisses given and returned with an ardour which one might call truly Venetian if it were not that this would wound the feelings of the almost equally ardent Provençals.

I took my niece for a sail in the bay and, after we had enjoyed one of those delicious evenings which I think can be found nowhere else—sailing on a mirror silvered by the moon, over which float the odours

of jasmine, orange blossoms, pomegranates, aloes and all the scented flowers which grow along the coasts—we returned to our lodging and I asked Annette what had become of Marcoline. She told me that she had gone to bed early, and I went gently into her room, with no other intention than to see her asleep. The light of the candle woke her and she did not seem at all frightened at seeing me. I sat by the bed and fell to making love to her and at last made as if I would kiss her, but she resisted and we went on talking.

When Annette had put her mistress to bed, she came in and found us together.

“Go to bed, my dear,” said I. “I will come to you directly.”

Proud of being my mistress, she gave me a fiery kiss and went away without a word.

I began to talk about my brother and, passing from him to myself, I told her of the interest I felt in her, saying that I would either have her taken to Venice or take her with me when I went to France.

“Will you marry me there?”

“No, I am married already.”

“That’s a lie, I know, but it doesn’t matter. Send me back to Venice and the sooner, the better. I don’t want to be anybody’s concubine.”

“I admire your sentiments, my dear, they do you honour.”

Continuing my praise, I became pressing, not using any force but those gentle caresses which are so much harder for a woman to resist than a violent attack. Marcoline laughed, but, seeing that I persisted in spite of her resistance, she suddenly glided out of bed and took refuge in my niece’s room and locked the door after her. I was not displeased, the thing was done so easily and gracefully. I went to bed with Annette, who lost nothing by the ardour with which Marcoline had inspired me. I told her how she had escaped from my hands and Annette was loud in her praises.

In the morning I got up early and went into my niece’s room to enjoy the sight of the companion I had involuntarily given her, and the two girls were certainly a very pleasant sight. As soon as my niece saw me, she exclaimed:

“My dear uncle, would you believe it? This sly Venetian has made love to me!”

Marcoline understood her and, far from denying the fact, proceeded to give my niece fresh marks of her affection, which were well received and I could make a pretty good guess as to the nature of their amusement.

I lifted the sheets off the bed. Marcoline shrieked but did not move, but my niece earnestly begged me to replace the bedclothes. However, the picture before me was too charming to be concealed.

At this point Annette came in and, in obedience to her mistress, replaced the coverlet over the two Bacchantes. I felt angry with Annette and, seizing her, threw her on the bed. . . . I felt satisfied with what I had done and went to breakfast. I then dressed and visited my brother.

"How is Marcoline?" said he, as soon as he saw me.

"Very well and you needn't trouble yourself any more about her. She is well lodged, well dressed and well fed and sleeps with my niece's maid."

"I didn't know I had a niece."

"There are many things you don't know. In three or four days Marcoline will return to Venice."

"I hope, dear brother, you will ask me to dine with you to-day."

"Not at all, 'dear brother.' I forbid you to set foot in my house, where your presence would be offensive to Marcoline, whom you must not see any more."

"Indeed I will, I will return to Venice if I have to hang for it."

"What good would that be? She won't have you."

"She loves me."

"She beats you."

"She beats me because she loves me. She will be as gentle as a lamb when she sees me so well dressed. You do not know how I am suffering."

"I can partly guess, but I do not pity you, for you are an impious and cruel fool. You have broken your vows and have not hesitated to make a young girl endure misery and degradation to satisfy your caprice. What would you have done, I should like to know, if I had given you the cold shoulder, instead of helping you?"

"I should have gone into the streets and begged for my living with her."

"She would have beaten you and would probably have appealed to the law to get rid of you."

"But what will you do for me if I let her go back to Venice without following her?"

"I will take you to France and try to get you employed by some bishop."

"Employed! I was meant by nature to be employed by none but God."

"You proud fool! Marcoline rightly called you a whiner. Who is your God? How do you serve Him? You are either a hypocrite or an idiot. Do you think that you, a priest, serve God by decoying an innocent girl away from her home? Do you serve Him by profaning the religion you do not even understand? Unhappy fool! Do you think that, with no talent, no theological learning and no eloquence, you can be a Protestant minister? Take care never to come to my house or I will have you driven out of Genoa."

"Well then, take me to Paris and I will see what my brother François can do for me; his heart is not so hard as yours."

"Very good! You shall go to Paris and we will start from here in three or four days. Eat and drink to your heart's content, but remain indoors; I will let you know when we are going. I shall have my niece, my secretary and my valet with me. We shall travel by sea."

"The sea makes me sick."

"That will purge away some of your bad humours."

When I got home, I told Marcoline what had passed between us. "I hate him!" said she. "But I forgive him, since it is through him I met you."

"And I forgive him, too, because, if it had not been for him, I should never have seen you. But I love you and I shall die unless you satisfy my desires."

"Never; for I know I should be madly in love with you and then you would leave me and I should be miserable again."

"I will never leave you."

"If you will swear that, take me to France and make me all your own. Here you must continue living with Annette; besides, I have your niece to make love to."

The amusing part of the affair was that my niece was equally taken with her and had begged me to let her take her meals with us and sleep with her. As I had a prospect of being present, I willingly consented and thenceforth she was always present at the table. We enjoyed her company immensely, for she told us side-splitting tales which kept us at table till it was time to go to Rosalie's, where my niece's adorer was certain to be awaiting us.

The next day, which was Holy Thursday, Rosalie went with us to see the processions. I had Rosalie and Marcoline with me, one on each arm, veiled in their *mezzari*, and my niece was under the charge of her lover. The day after, we all went to see the procession called in Genoa, *Caracce*, and Marcoline pointed out my brother, who kept hovering round us, though he pretended not to see us. He was most carefully dressed and the stupid fop seemed to think he was sure to find favour in Marcoline's eyes and make her regret having despised him, but he was woefully deceived, for Marcoline knew how to manage her *mezzaro* so well that, though he was both seen and laughed at, the poor devil could not be certain that she had noticed him at all, and in addition the sly girl held me so closely by the arm that he must have concluded we were very intimate.

My niece and Marcoline thought themselves the best friends in the world and could not bear my telling them that their amorous sports were the only reason for their attachment. They therefore agreed to abandon them as soon as we left Genoa and promised that I should sleep between them in the felucca, all of us to keep our clothes on. I said I should hold them to their word, and I fixed our departure for Thursday. I ordered the felucca to be in readiness and summoned my brother to go on board.

It was a cruel moment when I left Annette with her mother. She wept so bitterly that all of us had to shed tears. My niece gave her a handsome dress and I, thirty sequins, promising to come and see her again on my return from England. Possano was told to go on board with the abbé, I had provisioned the boat for three days. The young merchant promised to be in Marseilles in two weeks, telling my niece that, by the time he came, everything would be settled between their

fathers. I was delighted to hear it; it assured me that her father would give her a kind reception. Our friends did not leave us till we went on board.

The felucca was very conveniently arranged and was propelled by twelve strong oarsmen. On the deck there were two swivels and there were also twenty-four muskets, so that we would have been able to defend ourselves against a pirate. Clairmont had arranged my carriage and my trunks so cleverly that, by stretching five mattresses over them, we had an excellent bed, where we could sleep and undress in perfect comfort; we had good pillows and plenty of sheets. A long awning covered the deck and two lanterns were hung up, one at each end. In the evening they were lighted and Clairmont served us our supper. I had warned my brother that at the slightest presumption on his part he would be flung into the sea, so I allowed him and Possano to sup with us.

I sat between my two nymphs and served the company merrily, first my niece, then Marcoline, then my brother and finally Possano. No water was drunk at table, so we each emptied a bottle of excellent Burgundy and, when we had finished supper, the rowers rested on their oars, although the wind was very light. I had the lamps put out and went to bed with my two sweethearts, one on each side of me.

The light of dawn awoke me and I found my darlings still sleeping in the same position. I could kiss neither of them, since the one passed for my niece and my sense of humanity would not allow me to treat Marcoline as my mistress in the presence of an unfortunate brother who adored her and had never obtained the least favour from her. He was lying near at hand, overwhelmed with grief and seasickness and listening with all his might for the amorous encounter he suspected us of engaging in. I did not want to have any unpleasantness, so I contented myself with gazing on them till the two roses awoke and opened their eyes.

When this delicious sight was over, I got up and found that we were only opposite Final and I proceeded to reprimand the master.

"The wind fell dead at Savona, sir." And all the seamen chorused his excuse.

"Then you should have rowed, instead of idling."

"We were afraid of waking you. You shall be at Antibes by to-morrow."

After passing the time by eating a hearty meal, we took a fancy to go on shore at San Remo. Everybody was delighted. I took my two nymphs on land and, after forbidding any of the others to disembark, I conducted the ladies to an inn, where I ordered coffee. A man accosted us and invited us to come and play *biribi* at his house.

"I thought the game was forbidden throughout the state of Genoa," said I.

I felt certain that the players were the rascals whose bank I had broken at Genoa, so I accepted the invitation. My niece had fifty louis in her purse and I gave fifteen to Marcoline. We found a large assem-

blage, room was made for us and I recognised the knaves of Genoa. As soon as they saw me, they turned pale and trembled. I should say that the man with the bag was not the poor devil who had served me so well without wanting to.

"I play harlequin," said I.

"There isn't one."

"What's the bank?"

"There it is. We play for small stakes here and those two hundred louis are quite sufficient. You can bet as low as you like, and the highest stake is a louis."

"That's all very well, but my louis is full weight."

"I think ours are, too."

"Are you sure?"

"No."

"Then I won't play," said I to the keeper of the rooms.

"You are right, bring the scales."

The banker then said that, when play was over, he would give four crowns of six livres for every louis that the company had won, and the matter was settled. In a moment the board was covered with stakes.

We each punted a louis at a time and I and my niece lost twenty louis, but Marcoline, who had never possessed two sequins in her life before, won two hundred and forty louis. She played on the figure of an abbé, which came out fifth twenty times. She was given a bag full of crown pieces and we returned to the felucca.

The wind was contrary and we had to row all night and in the morning the sea was so rough that we had to put in at Mentone. My two sweethearts were very sick, as also my brother and Possano, but I was perfectly well. I took the two invalids to the inn and allowed my brother and Possano to land and refresh themselves. The innkeeper told me that the Prince and Princess of Monaco were at Mentone, so I resolved to pay them a visit. It was thirteen years since I had seen the prince in Paris, where I had amused him and his mistress Caroline at supper. It was this prince who had taken me to see the horrible Duchess of Rufec; then he was unmarried and now I met him again in his principality with his wife, of whom he had already two sons. The princess had been a Duchesse de Borgholi, a great heiress and a delightful and pretty woman. I had heard all about her and was curious to verify the facts for myself.

I called on the prince, was announced and after a long wait they introduced me to the presence. I gave him his title of "Highness," which I had never done in Paris, where he was not known under his full style and title. He received me politely, but with that coolness which lets one know that one is not an over-welcome visitor.

"You have put in on account of the bad weather, I suppose?" said he.

"Yes, prince, and, if Your Highness will allow me, I will spend the whole day in your delicious city." (It is far from delicious.)

"As you please. The princess, as well as myself, likes it better than Monaco, so we live here by preference."

"I should be grateful if Your Highness would present me to the princess."

Without mentioning my name, he ordered a page in waiting to present me to the princess.

The page opened the door of a handsome room and said, "the princess" and left me. She was singing at the piano, but, as soon as she saw me, she rose and came to meet me. I was obliged to introduce myself, a most unpleasant thing, and no doubt the princess felt the situation, but she pretended not to notice it and addressed me with the utmost kindness and politeness and in a way that showed she was learned in the maxims of good society. I immediately became very much at my ease and proceeded in a lordly manner to entertain her with pleasant talk, though I said nothing about my two lady friends.

The princess was handsome, clever and good-natured. Her mother, who knew that a man like the prince would never make her daughter happy, had opposed the marriage, but the young marchioness was infatuated and the mother had to give in when the girl said, "O Monaco o monaca." (Either Monaco or a monastery.)

We were still occupied with the trifles which keep up an ordinary conversation when the prince came in running after a waiting-maid, who was making her escape, laughing. The princess pretended not to see him and went on with what she was saying. The scene displeased me and I took leave of the princess, who wished me a pleasant journey. I met the prince as I was going out, and he invited me to come and see him whenever I passed that way.

"Certainly," said I, and made my escape without saying any more.

I went back to the inn and ordered a good dinner for three.

In the principality of Monaco there was a French garrison, which was worth a pension of a hundred thousand francs to the prince—a very welcome addition to his income.

A curled and scented young officer, passing by our room, the door of which was open, stopped short and with unblushing politeness asked us if we would allow him to join our party. I replied politely, but coldly, that he did us honour, a phrase which means neither "yes" or "no," but a Frenchman who has advanced one step never retreats.

He proceeded to display his graces for the benefit of the ladies, talking incessantly without giving them time to get in a word; then he suddenly turned to me and said he wondered how it was the prince had not asked me and my ladies to dinner. I told him I had not said anything to the prince about the treasure I had with me.

I had scarcely uttered the words when the kindly blockhead rose and cried enthusiastically:

"Parbleu! I am no longer surprised. I will go and tell His Highness and I shall soon have the honour of dining with you at the castle."

He did not wait to hear my answer but went off in hot haste.

We laughed heartily at his folly, feeling quite sure that we should

dine with neither him nor the prince, but in a quarter of an hour he returned in high glee, and invited us all to dinner on behalf of the prince.

"I beg you will thank His Highness and at the same time ask him to excuse us. The weather has improved and I want to be off as soon as we have taken a hasty morsel."

The young Frenchman exerted all his eloquence in vain and at length retired with a mortified air to take our answer to the prince.

I thought I had gotten rid of him at last, but I did not know my man. He returned a short time after and, addressing himself in a complacent manner to the ladies, as if I were of no more account, he told them he had given the prince such a description of their charms that he had made up his mind to dine with them.

"I have already ordered the table to be laid for two more, as I shall have the honour of being of the party. In a quarter of an hour, ladies, the prince will be here."

"Very good," said I, "but, as the prince is coming, I must go to the felucca and fetch a capital pie, of which the prince is very fond, I know. Come, ladies."

"You can leave them here, sir. I will undertake to keep them amused."

"I have no doubt you would, but they have some things to get from the felucca as well."

"Then you will allow me to come, too?"

"Certainly, with pleasure."

As we were going down the stairs, I asked the innkeeper what I owed him.

"Nothing, sir, I have just received orders to serve you in everything and to take no money from you."

"The prince is really magnificent!" During this short dialogue, the ladies had gone on with the fop. I hastened to rejoin them, and my niece took my arm, laughing heartily to hear the officer making love to Marcoline, who did not understand a word he said. He did not notice it in the least, for his tongue kept going like the wheel of a mill and he did not pause for any answers.

"We shall have some fun at dinner," said my niece, "but what are we going to do on the felucca?"

"We are leaving. Say nothing."

"Leaving?"

"Immediately."

"What a jest! It is worth its weight in gold."

We went on board the felucca and the officer, who was delighted with the pretty vessel, proceeded to examine it. I told my niece to keep him company and, going to the master, I whispered to him to let go directly.

"Directly?"

"Yes, this moment."

"But the abbé and your secretary are gone for a walk and two of my men are on shore, too."

"That's no matter; we will pick them up again at Antibes; it's only ten leagues and they have plenty of money. I must go, and at once. Make haste."

"All right."

He tripped the anchor and the felucca began to swing away from the shore. The officer asked me in great astonishment what it meant

"It means that I am going to Antibes and I shall be very glad to take you there for nothing."

"This is a fine jest! You are joking, surely?"

"Your company will be very pleasant on the journey."

"Parbleu! Put me ashore, for, with your leave, ladies, I cannot go to Antibes."

"Put the gentleman ashore," said I to the master. "He does not seem to like our company."

"It's not that, upon my honour. These ladies are charming, but the prince would think that I was in the plot to play this trick upon him, which you must confess is rather strong."

"I never play a weak trick."

"But what will the prince say?"

"He may say what he likes, and I shall do as I like."

"Well, it's no fault of mine. Farewell, ladies! Farewell, sir!"

"Farewell, and you may thank the prince for me for paying my bill."

Marcoline, who did not understand what was passing, gazed in astonishment, but my niece laughed till her sides ached, for the way in which the poor officer had taken the matter was extremely comic.

Clairmont brought us an excellent dinner and we laughed incessantly during its progress, even over the astonishment the abbé and Possano would experience when they came to the quay and found the felucca had flown. However, I was sure of meeting them again at Antibes and we reached that port at six o'clock in the evening.

The motion of the sea had tired us without making us feel sick, for the air was fresh and our appetites felt the benefits of it, and in consequence we did great honour to the supper and the wine. Marcoline, whose stomach was weakened by the sickness she had undergone, soon felt the effects of the Burgundy, her eyes were heavy and she went to sleep. My niece would have imitated her, but I reminded her tenderly that we were at Antibes, and said I was sure she would keep her word. She did not answer me but gave me her hand, lowering her eyes with much modesty.

Intoxicated with her submission, which was so like love, I got into bed beside her, exclaiming, "At last the hour of my happiness has come!"

"And mine, too, dearest."

"Yours? Have you not continually repulsed me?"

"Never! I always loved you and your indifference has been a bitter grief to me."

"But the first night we left Milan you preferred being alone to sleeping with me."

"Could I do otherwise without passing in your eyes for being more a slave to sensual passion than to love? Besides, you might have thought I was giving myself to you for the benefits I had received; and, though gratitude be a noble feeling, it destroys all the sweet delights of love. You ought to have told me that you loved me and have subdued me by those attentions which conquer the hearts of us women. Then you would have seen that I loved you, too, and our affection would have been mutual. On my side I should have known that the pleasure you had of me was not given out of a mere feeling of gratitude. I do not know whether you would have loved me less the morning after if I had consented, but I am sure I should have lost your esteem."

She was right and I applauded her sentiments, while giving her to understand that she was to put all notions of benefits received out of her mind. I wanted to make her see that I knew there was no more need for gratitude on her side than on mine.

We spent a night that must be imagined rather than described. She told me in the morning that she felt all had been for the best, as, if she had given way at first, she could never have made up her mind to accept the young Genoese, though he seemed likely to make her happy.

Marcoline came to see us in the morning, caressed us and promised to sleep by herself for the rest of the voyage.

"Then you are not jealous?" said I.

"No, for her happiness is mine, too, and I know she will make you happy."

Marcoline was becoming more ravishingly beautiful every day.

Possano and the abbé came in just as we were sitting down to table and, my niece having ordered two more plates, I allowed them to dine with us. My brother's face was pitiful and yet ridiculous. He could not walk any distance, so he had been obliged to come on horseback, probably for the first time in his life.

"My skin is delicate," said he, "so I am all blistered. But God's will be done! I do not think any of His servants have endured greater torments than mine during this journey. My body is sore and so is my soul."

So saying, he cast a piteous glance at Marcoline and we had to hold our sides to prevent ourselves from laughing. My niece could bear it no more and said, "How I pity you, dear uncle!"

At this he blushed and began to address the most absurd compliments to her, styling her "my dear niece." I told him to be silent and not to speak French till he was able to express himself in that language (which lends itself so readily to equivocal meanings) without making a fool of himself. But the poet Pogomas spoke no better than he did.

I was curious to know what had happened at Mentone after we had left, and Pogomas proceeded to tell the story.

"When we came back from our walk, we were greatly astonished not to find the felucca any more. We went to the inn, where I knew you had ordered dinner; but the innkeeper knew nothing except that he was expecting the prince and a young officer to dine with you. I told

him he might wait for you in vain, and just then the prince came up in a rage and told the innkeeper that, now you were gone, he might look to you for his payment. 'My lord,' said the innkeeper, 'the gentleman wanted to pay me, but I respected the orders I had received from Your Highness and would not take the money.' At this, the prince flung him a louis with ill grace and asked us who we were. I told him we belonged to you and you had not waited for us either, which put us to great trouble. 'You will get away easily enough,' said he. And then he began to laugh and swore the jest was a pleasant one. He asked me who the ladies were. I told him one was your niece and that I knew nothing of the other, but the abbé interfered and said she was your *cuisine*. The prince guessed he meant to say cousin, and burst out laughing, in which he was joined by the young officer. 'Greet him from me,' said he, as he went away, 'and tell him we shall meet again and I will pay him back for the trick he has played me.'

"The worthy host laughed, too, when the prince had gone, and gave us a good dinner, saying that the prince's louis would pay for it all. When we had dined, we hired two horses and slept at Nice. In the morning we rode on again, being certain of finding you here."

Marcoline told the abbé in a cold voice to take care not to tell anyone else that she was his *cuisine* or his cousin, or it would go ill with him, as she did not wish to be thought either the one or the other. I also advised him seriously not to speak French in future, as the absurd things he said made everyone about him ashamed.

Just as I was ordering post-horses to take us to Fréjus, a man appeared and told me I owed him ten louis for the storage of a carriage which I had left on his hands nearly three years before. This was when I was taking Rosalie to Italy. I laughed, for the carriage itself was not worth five louis. "Friend," said I, "I make you a present of the article."

"I don't want your present. I want the ten louis you owe me."

"You won't get the ten louis. I will see you further first."

"We will see about that." And, so saying, he took his departure.

I sent for horses that we might continue our journey.

A few moments after a sergeant summoned me to the governor's presence. I followed him and was politely requested to pay the ten louis my creditor demanded. I answered that, in the agreement I had entered into for six francs a month, there was no mention of the length of the term and I did not want to withdraw my carriage.

"But supposing you were never to withdraw it?"

"Then the man could bequeath his claim to his heir."

"I believe he could oblige you to withdraw it or allow it to be sold to defray expenses."

"You are right, sir, and I wish to spare him that trouble. I make him a present of the carriage."

"That's enough. Friend, the carriage is yours."

"But, sir," said the plaintiff, "it is not enough; the carriage is not worth ten louis and I want the difference."

"You are in the wrong, my friend. Sir, I wish you a pleasant

journey, and hope you will forgive the ignorance of these poor people, who would like to shape the laws according to their needs."

All this trouble had made me lose a good deal of time and I determined to put off my departure till the next day. However, I needed a carriage for Possano and the abbé and I got my secretary to buy the one I had abandoned for four louis. It was in a deplorable state and I had to have it repaired, which kept us till the afternoon of the next day; however, so far as pleasure was concerned, the time was not lost.

CHAPTER 101

My niece, now my mistress, grew more dear to me every day and I could not help trembling when I reflected that Marseilles would be the tomb of our love. Though I could not help arriving there, I prolonged my happiness as long as I could by travelling by short stages. I got to Fréjus in less than three hours and stopped there and, telling Possano and the abbé to do as they liked during our stay, I ordered a delicate supper and choice wine for myself and my nymphs. Our repast lasted till midnight, then we went to bed and passed the time in sweet sleep and sweeter pleasures. I made the same arrangements at Le Luc, Brignoles and Aubagne, where I passed the sixth and last night of happiness. As soon as I got to Marseilles, I conducted my niece to Madame Audibert's and sent Possano and my brother to the Treize Cantons Inn, bidding them observe the strictest silence with regard to me, for Madame d'Urfé had been awaiting me for three weeks and I wished to be my own herald to her.

It was at Madame Audibert's that my niece had met Croce. That lady was a clever woman and had known the girl from her childhood and it was through her that my niece hoped to be restored to her father's good graces. We had agreed that I should leave my niece and Marcoline in the carriage and interview Madame Audibert, whose acquaintance I had made before and with whom I could make arrangements for my niece's lodgings till some agreement was come to.

Madame Audibert saw me getting out of my carriage and, as she did not recognise me, her curiosity made her come down and open the door. When she found out who I was, she consented with the best grace in the world to let me have a private interview.

I did not lose any time in leading up to the subject and, after I had given her a rapid sketch of the affair, how misfortune had obliged La Croix to abandon Mlle. Crosin, how I had been able to be of service to her and, finally, how she had had the good luck to meet a wealthy and distinguished person who would come to Marseilles in a fortnight to ask her hand, I concluded by saying that I would have the happiness of restoring to her hands the dear girl whose preserver I had been.

"Where is she?" cried Madame Audibert.

"In my carriage. I have lowered the blinds."

"Bring her in quick! I will see to everything. Nobody shall know that she is in my house."

Happier than a prince, I made one bound to the carriage and, concealing her face with her cloak and hood, I led my niece to her friend's arms. It was a dramatic scene full of satisfaction for me. Kisses were given and received, tears of happiness and repentance shed, I wept myself from mingled feelings of emotion, happiness and regret.

In the meanwhile Clairmont had brought up my niece's luggage and I went away, promising to come back to see her another day.

I had another and equally important arrangement to conclude—I mean, with respect to Marcoline. I told the postillions to take me to the worthy old man's house where I had lodged Rosalie so pleasantly. Marcoline was weeping at this separation from her friend. I got out at the house and made my bargain hastily. My new mistress was, I said, to be lodged, fed and attended as if she had been a princess. He showed me the apartment she was to occupy; it was fit for a young marchioness; and he told me that she should be attended by his own niece, that she should not leave the house and that nobody but myself should visit her.

Having made these arrangements, I had the fair Venetian come in. I gave her the money she had won, which I had converted into gold and made up to a thousand ducats.

"You won't need it here," said I, "so take care of it. In Venice a thousand ducats will make you somebody. Do not weep, dearest; my heart is with you and to-morrow evening I will sup with you."

The old man gave me the latch-key and I went off to the Treize Cantons. I was expected and my rooms were adjacent to those occupied by Madame d'Urfé.

As soon as I was settled, Brougnole waited on me and told me her mistress was alone and awaiting me impatiently.

I shall not trouble my readers with an account of our interview, as it was composed only of Madame d'Urfé's mad flights of fancy and of lies on my part which had not even the merit of probability. A slave to my life of happy profligacy, I profited by her folly; she would have found someone else to deceive her if I had not done so, for it was really she who deceived herself. I naturally preferred to profit by her, rather than that a stranger should do so; she was very rich and I did myself a great deal of good, without doing anyone any harm.

The first thing she asked me was, "Where is Querilinthos?" And she jumped with joy when I told her that he was under the same roof.

"'Tis he, then, who shall make me young again. So has my genius assured me night after night. Ask *Paralis* if the presents I have prepared are good enough for Semiramis to present to the head of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross."

I did not know what these presents were and, as I could not ask to see them, I answered that, before consulting *Paralis*, it would be neces-

sary to consecrate the gifts under the planetary hours and that Querilinthos himself must not see them before the consecration. Thereupon she took me to her closet and showed me the seven packets meant for the Rosicrucian in the form of offerings to the seven planets.

Each packet contained seven pounds of the metal proper to the planet and seven precious stones, also proper to the planet, each being seven carats in weight; there were diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, chrysolites, topazes and opals.

I made up my mind that nothing of this should pass into the hands of the Genoese, and told the mad woman that we must trust entirely in *Paralis* for the method of consecration, which must be begun by our placing each packet in a small casket made on purpose. One packet, and one only, should be consecrated in a day and it was necessary to begin with the sun. It was now Friday and we should have to wait till Sunday, the day of the sun. On Saturday I had a box with seven niches made for the purpose.

For the purposes of consecration I spent three hours every day with Madame d'Urfé and we had not finished till the ensuing Saturday. Throughout this week I made Possano and my brother take their meals with us and, as the latter did not understand a word the good lady said, he did not speak a word himself and might have passed for a mute of the seraglio. Madame d'Urfé pronounced him devoid of sense and imagined that we were going to put the soul of a sylph into his body, that he might engender some being half human, half divine.

It was amusing to see my brother's despair and rage at being taken for an idiot and, when he endeavoured to say something to show that he was not one, she only thought him more idiotic than ever. I laughed to myself and thought how ill he would have played the part if I had asked him to do it. All the same, the rascal did not lose anything by his reputation, for Madame d'Urfé clothed him with a decent splendour that would have led one to suppose that the abbé belonged to one of the first families in France. The most uneasy guest at Madame d'Urfé's table was Possano, who had to reply to questions of the most occult nature and, not knowing anything about the subject, made the most ridiculous mistakes. Not daring to get drunk, he would yawn again and again, nor did he maintain that decent courtesy which is observed in France more than anywhere else. Madame d'Urfé remarked to me that some grave misfortune must be hanging over the Order, since this great man was so preoccupied.

I brought Madame d'Urfé the box and, having made all the necessary arrangements for the consecrations, I received an order from the oracle to go into the country and sleep there for seven nights in succession, to abstain from intercourse with all mortal women and to perform ceremonial worship to the moon in the open fields every night at the hour of that planet. This would make me fit to regenerate Madame d'Urfé myself in case Querilinthos, for some mystic reasons, might not be able to do so.

Through this order Madame d'Urfé was not only not vexed with

her to enjoy herself, I begged my kind landlord to send her to the play every day with his niece and to prepare a good supper for me every evening. I got her some rich dresses, that she might cut a good figure, and this attention redoubled her affection for me.

The next day, which was the second time I had visited her, she told me she had enjoyed the play, though she could not understand the dialogue; and the day after she astonished me by saying that my brother had intruded himself into her box and had said so many impertinent things that, if she had been in Venice, she would have boxed his ears.

"I am afraid," she added, "that the rascal has followed me here and will be annoying me."

"Don't be afraid," I answered. "I will see what I can do."

When I got back to the hotel, I entered the abbé's room and by Possano's bed I saw a man who was gathering up some lint and various surgical instruments.

"What's all this? Are you ill?"

"Yes, I have something which will teach me to be wiser in future."

"At sixty, it is rather late for that kind of thing."

"Better late than never."

"You are an old fool. You stink of mercury."

"I shall not leave my room."

"This will harm you with the marchioness, who believes you to be the greatest of adepts and consequently above such weaknesses."

"Damn the marchioness! Let me be."

The rascal had never talked in this style before. I thought it best to conceal my anger and went up to my brother, who was in a corner of the room.

"What did you mean by pestering Marcoline at the theatre yesterday?"

"I went to remind her of her duty and to warn her that I would not be her complaisant lover."

"You have insulted her and me, too, fool that you are! You owe all to Marcoline, for, if it had not been for her, I should never have given you a second glance; and yet you behave in this disgraceful manner."

"I have ruined myself for her sake and can never show my face in Venice again. What right have you to take her from me?"

"The right of love, blockhead, and the right of luck and the right of the strongest! How is it that she is happy with me and does not wish to leave me?"

"You have dazzled her."

"Another reason is that with you she was dying of poverty and hunger."

"Yes, but the end of it will be that you will abandon her, as you have many others, whereas I would have married her."

"Married her! You renegade, you seem to forget you are a priest."

I do not propose to part with her, but, if I do, I will send her away rich."

"Well, do as you please; but still, I have the right to speak to her whenever I like."

"I have forbidden you to do so and you may trust me when I tell you that you have spoken to her for the last time."

So saying, I went out and called on an advocate. I asked him if I could have a foreign abbé, who was indebted to me, arrested, although I had no proof of the debt.

"You can do so, as he is a foreigner, but you will have to put up a bond. You can have him put under arrest at his inn and you can make him pay, unless he is able to prove that he owes you nothing. Is the sum a large one?"

"Twelve louis."

"You must come with me before the magistrate and deposit twelve louis and from that moment you will be able to have him arrested. Where is he staying?"

"In the same hotel as I, but I do not wish to have him arrested there, so I will get him to the Sainte Baume and put him under guard there. Meanwhile, here are the twelve louis; you can get the magistrate's order and we will meet again to-morrow."

"Give me his name and yours also."

I returned in haste to the Treize Cantons and met the abbé, dressed up to the nines and just about to go out.

"Follow me," said I. "I am going to take you to Marcoline and you two will thrash the matter out in my presence."

"With pleasure."

He got into a carriage with me and I told the coachman to take us to the Sainte Baume. When we got there, I told him to wait for me, that I was going to fetch Marcoline and would return with her in a minute.

I got into the carriage again and drove to the advocate, who gave the order for arrest to a policeman to execute. I then returned to the Treize Cantons and put my brother's belongings into a trunk and had them transported to his new abode.

I found him under arrest and talking to the astonished host, who could not understand what it was all about. I told the landlord a mythical story of the abbé's debt to me and handed over the trunk, telling him he had nothing to fear with regard to the bill, as I would take care that he should be well paid.

I then began my talk with the abbé, telling him that he must get ready to leave Marseilles the next day and that I would pay for his journey to Paris, but that, if he was not willing to do so, I would leave him to his fate and in three days he would be expelled from Marseilles. The coward began to weep and said he would go to Paris.

"You must start for Lyons to-morrow, but you will first write me out an I O U for twelve louis."

"Why?"

"Because I say so If you do so, I will give you twelve louis and tear up the document before your face."

"I have no choice in the matter."

"You are right."

When he had written the I O U, I went to take a place in the diligence for him and the next morning I went with the advocate to cancel the arrest and take back the twelve louis, which I gave to my brother in the diligence with a letter to M. Bono, whom I warned not to give him any money and to send him on to Paris by the same diligence. I then tore up his note of hand and wished him a pleasant journey.

Thus I got rid of this foolish fellow, whom I saw again in Paris in a month's time.

The day I had my brother arrested and before I went to dine with Madame d'Urfé, I had an interview with Possano, in the hope of discovering the reason of his ill humour.

"The reason is," said he, "that I am sure you are going to lay hands on twenty or thirty thousand crowns in gold and diamonds which the marchioness meant me to have."

"That may be, but it is not for you to know anything about it. I may tell you that it rests entirely with me to prevent your getting anything. If you think you can succeed, go to the marchioness and make your complaints to her. I will do nothing to prevent you."

"Then you think I am going to help you in your imposture for nothing; you are very much mistaken. I want a thousand louis, and I will have them, too."

"Then get somebody to give them to you," said I, and turned my back on him.

I went upstairs to the marchioness and told her that dinner was ready and that we should dine alone, as I had been obliged to send the abbé away.

"He was an idiot," she remarked. "But how about Querilinthos?"

"After dinner *Paralis* will tell us all about him. I have strong suspicions which must be cleared up."

"So have I. The man seems changed. Where is he?"

"He is in bed, ill of a disease which I dare not so much as name to you."

"That is a very extraordinary circumstance. It must be the work of the evil spirits, such as, perhaps, has never happened before."

"Never, that I know of. But now let us dine. We shall have to work hard to-day after the consecration of the tin."

"All the better. We must offer an expiatory sacrifice to Oromasis, for, awful thought! in three days he was to regenerate me and the operation would have been performed in that condition!"

"Let us eat now," I repeated.

"I fear lest the hour of Jupiter be over-past."

"Fear nothing. I will see that all goes well."

After the consecration of the tin had been performed, I put off that

of Oromasis to another day in order to consult the oracle assiduously, the marchioness translating the figures into letters. The oracle declared that seven salamanders had transported the true Querilinthos to the Milky Way and that the man in the next room was the evil genius St. Germain, who had been put in that fearful condition by a female gnome in order to make him the executioner of Semiramis, who was to die of the dreadful malady before her term had expired. The oracle also said that Semiramis should leave to *Paraliseus Galtinardus* (myself) all the charge of getting rid of the evil genius St. Germain, and that she was not to doubt concerning her regeneration, since the word would be sent me by the true Querilinthos from the Milky Way on the seventh night of my worship of the moon. Finally, the oracle declared that I was to inoculate Semiramis two days before the end of the ceremonies, after an Undine had purified us by bathing us in the room where we were.

I had thus undertaken to regenerate the worthy Semiramis and I began to think how I could carry out my worthy undertaking without putting myself to shame. The marchioness was handsome but old, and I feared lest I should be unable to perform the great act. I was thirty-eight and was beginning to feel age stealing on me. The Undine whom I was to obtain of the moon was none other than Marcoline, who was to give me the necessary generative vigour by the sight of her beauty and the contact of her hands. The reader will see how I made her come down from Heaven.

I received a note from Madame Audibert urging me to call on her before paying my visit to Marcoline. As soon as I came in, she told me joyously that my niece's father had just received a letter from the father of the Genoese, asking the daughter's hand for his only son, who was introduced to her by the Chevalier de Seingalt, her uncle, at the Parettis'.

"The worthy man thinks himself under great obligations to you," said Madame Audibert. "He adores his daughter and is sure you have cared for her like a father. His daughter has painted your portrait in very favourable colours and he would be extremely pleased to make your acquaintance. Tell me when you can sup with me; the father will be here to meet you, though not accompanied by his daughter."

"I am delighted at what you tell me, for the young man's esteem for his future wife will only be augmented when he finds that I am her father's friend. I cannot come to supper, however; I will be here at six and stop till eight."

As the lady left the choice of the day with me, I fixed the second day after and then repaired to my fair Venetian, to whom I told my news and how I had managed to get rid of the abbé.

On the day after the next, just as we were sitting down to dinner, the marchioness smilingly gave me a letter Possano had written her in bad but perfectly intelligible French. He had filled eight pages in his endeavour to convince her that I was deceiving her and, to make sure, he told the whole story without concealing any circumstance to

my disadvantage. He added that I had brought two girls with me to Marseilles, and, though he did not know where I had hidden them, he was sure it was with them that I was spending my nights.

After I had read the whole letter through, with the utmost coolness I gave it back to her, asking if she had had the patience to read it through. She replied that she had run through it but could not make it out at all, as the evil genius seemed to write a sort of outlandish dialect, which she did not care to puzzle herself over, as he could only have written down lies calculated to lead her astray at the most important moment of her life. I was much pleased with the marchioness's prudence, for it was important that she should have no suspicions about "Undine," the sight and touch of whom were necessary to me in the Great Work I was about to undertake.

After dining and discharging all the ceremonies and oracles which were necessary to calm the soul of my poor victim, I went to a banker and got a bill of a hundred louis on Lyons to the order of M. Bono and I advised him of what I had done, requesting him to cash it for Possano if it were presented on the day named thereon.

I then wrote the order for Possano to take with him. It ran as follows:

"M. Bono: Pay to M. Possano on sight, to himself and not to order, the sum of one hundred louis if these presents are delivered to you on the 30th day of April, in the year 1763; after the day aforesaid this my order to become null and void."

With this letter in my hand, I went to the traitor, who had been lanced an hour before.

"You're an infamous traitor," I began. "But, as Madame d'Urfé knows of the disgraceful state you are in, she would not so much as read your letter. I read it and by the way of reward I give you a choice which you must decide on immediately. I am in a hurry. You will either go to the almshouse—for we can't have pestiferous fellows like you here—or start for Lyons in an hour. You must not stop on the way, for I have given you only sixty hours, which, however, is ample to do forty posts in. As soon as you get to Lyons, present this to M. Bono and he will give you a hundred louis. This is a present from me and afterwards I don't care what you do, as you are no longer in my service. You can have the carriage I bought for you at Antibes and here are twenty-five louis for the journey. That is all. Make your choice, but I warn you that, if you go to the almshouse, I shall give you only a month's wages, as I dismiss you from my service now at this instant."

After a moment's reflection he said he would go to Lyons, though it would be at the risk of his life, for he was very ill.

"You must reap the reward of your treachery," said I, "and, if you die, it will be a good thing for your family, who will come in for what I have to give you—but not what I should have given you if you had been a faithful servant."

I then left him and told Clairmont to pack his trunk. I warned

the innkeeper of his departure and told him to get the post-horses ready as soon as possible.

I then gave Clairmont the letter to Bono and twenty-five louis, for him to hand them over to Possano when he was in the carriage and ready to go off.

When I had thus successfully accomplished my designs by means of the all-powerful lever, gold, which I knew how to lavish in time of need, I was once more free for my amours. I wanted to instruct the fair Marcoline, with whom I was growing more in love every day. She kept telling me that her happiness would be complete if she knew French and if she had the slightest hope that I would take her to England with me.

I had never flattered her that my love would go so far as that; yet I could not help feeling sad at the thought of parting from a being who seemed made to taste voluptuous pleasures and to communicate them with tenfold intensity to the man of her choice. She was delighted to hear that I had got rid of my two odious companions, and begged me to take her to the theatre. "For," said she, "everybody is asking who and what I am, and my landlord's niece is quite angry with me because I will not tell her the truth."

I told her I would take her out in the course of the next week, but that for the present I had a most important affair on hand, in which I had need of her assistance.

"I will do whatever you wish, dearest."

"Very good! Then listen to me. I will get you a disguise which will make you look like a smart footman, and in that costume you will call on the marchioness with whom I am lodging at the hour I shall name to you, and you will give her a note. Have you sufficient courage for that?"

"Certainly. Will you be there?"

"Yes. She will speak, but you must pretend to be dumb, as the note you bring with you will explain to us—also that you have come to wait upon us while we are bathing. She will accept the offer and, when she tells you to undress her from head to foot, you will do so. When you have done, undress yourself and gently rub the marchioness from the feet to the waist, but not higher.

"You may reckon on my following all your instructions, but you must realize that the task will be rather trying to my feelings."

"Not more trying than to mine."

"Is she very old?"

"Nearly seventy."

"My poor sweetheart! I do pity you. But, after this painful duty is over, you must sup here and sleep with me."

"Certainly."

On the day appointed I had a long and friendly interview with the father of my late niece. I told him all about his daughter, suppressing only the story of our own amours, which was hardly suitable for a father's ears. The worthy man embraced me again and again, calling

me his benefactor and saying that I had done more for his daughter than he would have done himself, which in a sense was perhaps true. He told me that he had received another letter from the father and a letter from the young man himself, who wrote in the most tender and respectful manner possible.

"He doesn't ask anything about the dower," said he, "a wonderful thing in these days, but I will give her a hundred and fifty thousand francs, for the marriage is an excellent one, especially after the escapade of my scatter-brained little girl. All Marseilles knows the father of her future husband and to-morrow I mean to tell the whole story to my wife and I am sure she will forgive the poor girl, as I have done."

I had to promise to be present at the wedding, which was to be at Madame Audibert's. That lady, knowing me to be very fond of play and there being a good deal of play going on at her house, wondered why she did not see more of me; but I was in Marseilles to create and not to destroy—there is a time for everything.

I had a green velvet jacket made for Marcoline, with breeches of the same and silver-lace garters, green silk stockings and fine leather shoes of the same colour. Her fine, black hair was confined in a net of green silk with a silver brooch. In this dress Marcoline's voluptuous and well-rounded form was displayed to so much advantage that, if she had shown herself in the street, all Marseilles would have run after her, for, in spite of her man's dress, anybody could see she was a girl. I took her to my rooms in her ordinary costume to show her where she would have to hide after the operation was over.

By Saturday we had finished all the consecrations and the oracle fixed the regeneration of Semiramis for the following Tuesday in the hours of the sun, Venus and Mercury, which follow each other in the planetary system of the magicians, as also in Ptolemy's. These hours were in ordinary parlance the ninth, tenth and eleventh of the day, since, the day being a Tuesday, the first hour was sacred to Mars. And, as at the beginning of May the hours are sixty-five minutes long, the reader, however little of a magician he may be, will understand that I had to perform the Great Work on Madame d'Urfé, beginning at half-past two and ending at five minutes to six. I had taken plenty of time, as I expected I should have great need of it.

On the Monday night, at the hour of the moon, I had taken Madame d'Urfé to the seashore, Clairmont following behind with the box containing the offerings, which weighed fifty pounds.

I was certain that nobody could see us and I told my companion that the time was come. I directed Clairmont to put the box down beside us and go and await us at the carriage. When we were alone, we addressed a solemn prayer to Selenis and then, to the great satisfaction of the marchioness, the box was cast into the sea. My satisfaction, however, was still greater than hers, as the reader will readily conceive, for the box contained merely fifty pounds of lead. The real box, containing the treasure, was comfortably hidden in my room.

When we got back to the Treize Cantons, I left Madame d'Urfé

alone, telling her I would return to the hotel when I had performed my conjurations to the moon at the same hour and in the same place in which I had performed the seven consecrations.

I spoke the truth. I went to Marcoline and, while she was putting on her disguise, I wrote on a sheet of white paper in large and odd-looking letters the following sentences, using rock alum in place of ink:

"I am dumb but not deaf. I am come from the Rhône to bathe you. The hour of Oromasis has begun."

"This is the note you are to give to the marchioness," I said, "when you appear before her."

After supper we walked to the hotel and got in without anyone seeing us. I hid Marcoline in a large cupboard and then, putting on my dressing-gown, I went to the marchioness to inform her that Selenis had fixed the next day for the hour of regeneration and that we must be careful to finish before the hour of the moon began, as otherwise the operation would be annulled, or at least greatly enfeebled.

"You must take care," I added, "that the bath be here beside your bed and that Brougnole does not interrupt us."

"I will tell her to go out. But Selenis promised to send an Undine."

"True, but I have not yet seen such a being."

"Ask of the oracle."

"Willingly."

She herself asked the question, imploring *Paralis* not to delay the time of her regeneration, even though Undine were lacking, since she could very well bathe herself.

"The commands of Oromasis change not," came the reply, "and in that you have doubted them, you have sinned."

At this, the marchioness arose and performed an expiatory sacrifice and it appeared, on consulting the oracle, that Oromasis was satisfied.

The old lady did not move my pity so much as my laughter. She solemnly embraced me and said, "To-morrow, Galtinardus, you will be my spouse and my father."

When I got back to my room and had shut the door, I drew "Undine" out of her place of concealment. She undressed and, as she knew that I should be obliged to husband my forces, she turned her back on me and we passed the night without giving each other a single kiss, for a spark would have set us ablaze.

Next morning, before summoning Clairmont, I gave her her breakfast and then replaced her in the cupboard. Later on I gave her her instructions over again, telling her to do everything with calm precision and a cheerful face and, above all, in silence.

"Fear not," said she. "I will make no mistakes."

As we were to dine at noon exactly, I went to look for the marchioness, but she was not in her room, though the bath was there and the bed which was to be our altar was prepared.

A few moments after the marchioness came out of her dressing-room, exquisitely painted, her hair arranged with the choicest lace, and look-

ing radiant. Her breasts, which forty years before had been the fairest in all France, were covered with a lace shawl; her dress was of the antique kind, but of extremely rich material; her earrings were emeralds, and a necklace of seven aquamarines of the finest water, from which hung an enormous emerald surrounded by twenty brilliants, each weighing a carat and a half, completed her costume. She wore on her finger the carbuncle which she thought worth a million francs, but which was really only a splendid imitation.

Seeing Semiramis thus decked out for the sacrifice, I thought it my bounden duty to offer her my homage. I would have knelt before her and kissed her hand, but she would not let me and instead opened her arms and strained me to her breast.

After telling Brougnole that she could go out till six o'clock, we talked over our mysteries till the dinner was brought in.

Clairmont was the only person privileged to see us at dinner, at which Semiramis would eat only fish. At half-past one I told Clairmont I was not at home to anyone and, giving him a louis, I told him to go and amuse himself till the evening.

The marchioness began to be uneasy and I pretended to be so, too. I looked at my watch, calculated how the planetary hours were proceeding and said from time to time, "We are still in the hour of Mars; that of the sun has not yet commenced."

At last the timepiece struck half-past two and two minutes afterwards the fair and smiling Undine was seen advancing into the room. She came forward with measured steps, knelt before Madame d'Ufré and gave her the paper she carried. Seeing that I did not rise, the marchioness remained seated, but she raised the spirit with a gracious air and took the paper from her. She was surprised, however, to find that it was all white.

I hastened to give her a pen to consult the oracle on the subject and, after I had made a pyramid of her question, she interpreted it and found the answer, "That which is written in water must be read in water."

"I understand now," said she and, going to the bath, she plunged the paper into it and then read in still whiter letters:

"I am dumb, but not deaf. I am come from the Rhône to bathe you. The hour of Oromasis has begun."

"Then bathe me, divine being," said Semiramis, putting down the paper and sitting on the bed.

With perfect exactitude Marcoline undressed the marchioness and delicately placed her feet in the water and then in a twinkling she had undressed and was in the bath beside Madame d'Urfé. What a contrast there was between the two bodies!

As I gazed on the beautiful girl, I spoke as follows:

"O divine being, wipe the feet of Semiramis and be the witness of my union with her, to the glory of the immortal Horomadis, King of the Salamanders"

Scarcely had I uttered my prayer when it was granted.

Semiramis had been handsome, but she was then what I am now, and, but for "Undine," the operation would have failed. Nevertheless, Semiramis was affectionate, clean and sweet in every respect and had nothing disgusting about her.

When the sacrifice had been laid upon the altar, I said, "We must now await the hour of Venus."

"Undine" performed the ablutions, embraced the bride and came to perform the same office for me.

Semiramis was in an ecstasy of happiness and, as she pointed out to me the beauties of "Undine," I was obliged to confess I had never seen any mortal woman to be compared to her in beauty. Semiramis grew excited by so voluptuous a sight and, when the hour of Venus began, I proceeded to the second sacrifice, which would be the severest, as the hour was of sixty-five minutes. Towards the end of the hour, as I was still unsuccessful, I was obliged to deceive the "bride" by feigning success.

But the third hour had come and we were obliged to satisfy Mercury. We spent a quarter of the time in the bath, while "Undine" delighted Semiramis by caresses that would have enchanted the Regent of France if he had ever known them. The good marchioness, believing these endearments to be peculiar to river spirits, was pleased with everything and begged "Undine" to show me the same kindness. Marcoline obeyed and I was encouraged to undertake to satisfy Mercury. I proceeded to the work but, alas, it was all in vain. I saw how my fruitless efforts vexed "Undine" and, perceiving that Madame d'Urfé had had enough, I again made up my mind to deceive her.

I threw myself into the bath and underwent my third ablution; then I dressed. Marcoline washed the marchioness and proceeded to clothe her and did so with such a graceful charm that Madame d'Urfé followed the inspiration of her good genius and threw her magnificent necklace over "Undine's" neck. After a parting kiss the latter vanished and went to her hiding-place in the cupboard.

Semiramis asked the oracle if the operation had been successful. The answer was that she bore within her the seed of the sun and in the beginning of the following February she would be brought to bed of another self of the same sex as the creator; but, in order that the evil genii might not be able to do her any harm, she must keep quiet in her bed for a hundred and seven hours in succession.

The worthy marchioness was delighted to receive this order and looked upon it as a good omen, for the ritual had tired her dreadfully. I kissed her, saying that I was going to the country to collect together what remained of the substances I had used in my ceremonies, but I promised to dine with her on the morrow.

I shut myself up in my room with "Undine," and we amused ourselves as best we could till it was night, for she could not go out in her spiritual costume while it was daylight. I took off my handsome wedding garment and, as soon as it was dusk, we crept out and went

away to Marcoline's lodging in a hackney coach, carrying with us the planetary offerings which I had acquired so cleverly.

We were dying of hunger, but the delicious supper which was waiting for us brought us to life again. As soon as we got into the room, Marcoline took off her green clothes and put on her woman's dress, saying:

"I was not born to wear the breeches. Here, take the beautiful necklace the madwoman gave me!"

"I will sell it, fair Undine, and you shall have the proceeds."

"Is it worth much?"

"At least a thousand sequins. By the time you get back to Venice, you will be worth at least five thousand ducats and you will be able to get a husband and live with him in comfortable style."

"Keep it all; I don't want it, I want *you*. I will never cease to love you; I will do whatever you tell me to and I promise never to be jealous. I will care for you—yes, as if you were my son."

"Let us not say anything more about it, fair Marcoline, but let us go to bed, for you have never inspired me with so much ardour as now."

"But you must be tired."

"Yes, but not exhausted."

"I pity you for having suffered so much."

"You will renew my strength."

As a matter of fact, I do not know whether to attribute it to the difference between the old and the young, but I spent a most delightful night with the beautiful Venetian, a night which I can compare only to those I passed at Parma with Henriette and at Muran with the beautiful nun. I spent fourteen hours in bed, of which four at least were devoted to expiating the insult I had offered to Love. When I had dressed and taken my chocolate, I told Marcoline to dress herself with elegance and to expect me in the evening just before the play began. I could see that she was intensely delighted with the prospect.

I found Madame d'Urfé in bed, dressed with care and in the fashion of a young bride and with a smile of satisfaction on her face which I had never remarked there before.

"To thee, beloved Galtinardus, I owe all my happiness," said she, as she embraced me.

"I am happy to have contributed to it, divine Semiramis, but you must remember I am only the agent of the genii."

Thereupon the marchioness began to argue in the most sensible manner, but unfortunately the foundation of her argument was wholly chimerical.

"Marry me," said she. "You will thus become governor of the child, who will be your son. In this manner you will manage all my property for me, including what I shall receive from my brother, M. de Pontcarré, who is old and cannot live much longer. If you do not take care of me in February next, when I shall be reborn as a man, into what hands shall I fall! I shall be called a bastard and my income of

eighty thousand francs will be lost to me. Think it over, dear Galtinardus. I must tell you that I feel already as if I were a man. I confess I am in love with Undine and I should like to know whether I shall be able to make love to her in fourteen or fifteen years' time. It shall be so if Oromasis wills it, and then I shall be happy indeed. What a charming creature she is? Have you ever seen a woman like her? What a pity she is dumb!

"She, no doubt, has a male water spirit for a lover. But all of them are dumb, since it is impossible to speak in the water. I wonder she is not deaf as well. I can't think why you didn't touch her. The softness of her skin is something wonderful; velvet and satin are not to be compared to it! And then her breath is so sweet! How delighted I should be if I could converse with such an exquisite being!

"Dear Galtinardus, I beg you will consult the oracle to find out where I am to be brought to bed and, if you won't marry me, I think I had better save all I have, that I may have some provision when I am born again, for in my early childhood I shall know nothing and money will be needed to educate me. By selling all I have, a large sum might be realised which could be put out at interest. Thus the interest would suffice without the capital being touched."

"The oracle must be our guide," said I. "You will be my son and I will never allow anyone to call you a bastard."

The sublime madwoman was quieted by this assurance.

Doubtless many a reader will say that, if I had been an honest man, I should have undeceived her, but I cannot agree with them, it would have been impossible and I confess that, even if it had been possible, I would not have done so, for it would only have made her unhappy.

I had told Marcoline to dress with elegance and I put on one of my handsomest suits to accompany her to the theatre. Chance brought the two sisters Rangoni, daughters of the Roman consul, into our box. As I had made their acquaintance on my first visit to Marseilles, I introduced Marcoline to them as my niece, who spoke only Italian. As the two young ladies spoke the tongue of Tasso also, Marcoline was highly delighted. The younger sister, who was by far the handsomer of the two, afterwards became the wife of Prince Gonzaga Solferino. The prince was a cultured man and even a genius, but very poor. For all that, he was a true son of Gonzaga, being a son of Leopold, who was also poor, and a girl of the Medini family, sister to the Medini who died in prison in London in the year 1787.

Babet Rangoni, though poor, deserved to become a princess, for she had all the airs and manners of one. She shines under her name of Ragoni amongst the princes and princesses of the almanacs. Her vain husband is delighted at his wife being thought to belong to the illustrious family of Medini—an innocent feeling, which does neither good nor harm. The same publications turn Medini into Medici, which is equally harmless. This species of lie arises from the idiotic pride of nobles, who think themselves raised above the rest of humanity by their titles, which they have often acquired by some act of baseness.

It is of no use interfering with them on this point, since all things are finally appreciated at their true value and the pride of the nobility is easily discounted when one sees them as they really are.

This Prince Gonzaga Solferino, whom I saw in Venice eighteen years ago, was living on a pension allowed him by the Empress. I hope the late Emperor did not deprive him of it, as it was well deserved by his genius and his knowledge of literature.

At the play Marcoline did nothing but chatter with Babet Rangoni, who wanted me to bring the fair Venetian to see her, but I had my own reasons for not doing so.

I was thinking how I could send Madame d'Urfé to Lyons, for I had no further use for her in Marseilles and she was often embarrassing. Fortunately, on the third day after her regeneration, she requested me to ask *Paralis* where she was to die (that is, be brought to bed). I made the oracle reply that she must sacrifice to the water spirits on the banks of two rivers at the same hour and that afterwards the question of her lying-in would be solved. The oracle added that I must perform three expiatory sacrifices to Saturn on account of my too harsh treatment of the false Querilinthos and that Semiramis need not take part in these ceremonies, though she herself must perform the sacrifices to the water spirits.

As I was pretending to think of a place where two rivers were sufficiently near to each other to fulfil the requirements of the oracle. Semiramis herself suggested that Lyons was watered by the Rhône and the Saône and would be an excellent place for the ceremony. As may be imagined, I immediately agreed with her. On asking *Paralis* if there were any preparations to be made, he replied that it would be necessary to pour a bottle of sea water into each river a fortnight before the sacrifice and that this ceremony was to be performed by Semiramis in person at the first diurnal hour of the moon.

"Then," said the marchioness, "the bottles must be filled here, for the other French ports are farther off. I will go as soon as ever I can leave my bed, and wait for you at Lyons; for, as you have to perform expiatory sacrifices to Saturn in this place, you cannot come with me."

I assented, pretending sorrow at not being able to accompany her. The next morning I brought her two well-sealed bottles of sea-water, telling her that she was to pour them out into the two rivers on the fifteenth of May (the current month). We fixed her departure for the eleventh, and I promised to rejoin her before the expiration of the fortnight. I gave her the hours of the moon in writing and also directions for the journey.

As soon as the marchioness had gone, I left the Treize Cantons and went to live with Marcoline, giving her four hundred and sixty louis, which, with the hundred and forty she had won at *biribi*, gave her a total of six hundred louis, or fourteen thousand four hundred francs. With this sum she could look the future in the face fearlessly.

The day after Madame d'Urfé's departure the betrothed of Mlle. Crosin arrived at Marseilles with a letter from Rosalie, which he handed

to me on the day of his arrival. She begged me in the name of our common honour to introduce the bearer in person to the father of the betrothed. Rosalie was right but, as the lady was not my real niece, there were some difficulties in the way. I welcomed the young man and told him I would first take him to Madame Audibert and we could then go together to his prospective father-in-law.

The young Genoese had gone to the Treize Cantons, where he thought I was staying. He was delighted to find himself so near the goal of his desires and his ecstasy received a new momentum when he saw how cordially Madame Audibert received him. We all got into my carriage and drove to see the father, who gave him an excellent reception and then presented him to his wife, who was already friendly disposed towards him.

I was pleasantly surprised when this good and sensible man introduced me to his wife as his cousin, the Chevalier de Seingalt, who had taken such care of their daughter. The good wife and mother, her husband's worthy partner, held out her hand to me and all my trouble was over.

My new cousin immediately sent an express messenger to his sister, telling her that he and his wife, his future son-in-law, Madame Audibert and a cousin she had not met before would come and dine with her on the following day. This done, he invited us, and Madame Audibert said she would escort us. She told him I had another niece with me, whom his daughter was very fond of and would be delighted to see again. The worthy man was overjoyed to be able in that way to increase his daughter's happiness. I, too, was pleased with Madame Audibert's tact and thoughtfulness; and, as making Marcoline happy was making me happy also, I expressed my gratitude to her in very warm terms.

I took the young Genoese to the play, to the great delight of Marcoline, who did not like the French simply because she could not converse with them. We had an excellent supper together, in the course of which I told Marcoline of the pleasure which awaited her on the morrow. I thought she would go wild with joy.

The next day we were at Madame Audibert's as punctually as Achilles on the field of battle. The lady spoke Italian well and was charmed with Marcoline, reproaching me for not having introduced her before. At eleven we got to St. Louis and my eyes were charmed with the dramatic situation. My late niece had an air of dignity which became her ravishingly, and received her future husband with great graciousness; and then, after thanking me with a pleasant smile for introducing him to her father, she passed from dignity to gaiety and gave her sweetheart a hundred kisses.

The dinner was delicious and passed off merrily; but I alone preserved a tender melancholy, though I laughed to myself when they asked me why I was sad. I was thought to be sad because I did not talk in my usual vivacious manner, but, far from being really sad, that was one of the happiest moments of my life. My whole being was absorbed in the calm delight which follows a good action. I was the

author of the comedy which promised such a happy ending. I was pleased with the thought that my influence in the world was more for good than for ill, and, though I was not born a king, yet I contrived to make many people happy. Everyone at table was indebted to me for some part of their happiness and the father, the mother, and the betrothed pair wholly so. This thought made me feel a peaceful calm which I could enjoy only in silence.

Mlle. Crosin returned to Marseilles with her father, her mother and her future husband, whom the father invited to take up his abode with them. I went back with Madame Audibert, who made me promise to bring the delightful Marcoline to sup with her. The marriage depended on the receipt of a letter from the young man's father, in answer, to one from my "niece's" father. It goes without saying that we were all asked to the wedding and Marcoline, happy over these pleasures, redoubled in affection for me.

When we went to sup with Madame Audibert, we found a rich and witty young wine merchant at her house. He sat beside Marcoline, who entertained him with her sallies; and, as the young man could speak Italian and even the Venetian dialect (for he had spent a year in Venice), he was much impressed by the charms of my new "niece."

I have always been jealous of my mistresses; but, when a rival promises to marry them and give them a good establishment, jealousy gives way to a more generous feeling. For the moment I satisfied myself by asking Madame Audibert who he was, and I was delighted to hear that he had an excellent reputation, a hundred thousand crowns, a large business and an independent fortune.

The next day he came to see us in our box at the theatre and Marcoline received him very graciously. Wishing to push the matter on, I asked him to sup with us and, when he came, I was well pleased with his manners and his intelligence; to Marcoline he was tender but respectful. On his departure I told him I hoped he would come and see us again and, when we were alone, I congratulated Marcoline on her conquest and showed her that she might hope to attain a position almost equal to that of Mlle. Crosin. But, instead of being grateful, she was furiously angry.

"If you want to get rid of me," said she, "send me back to Venice, but don't talk to me about marrying."

"Calm yourself, my angel! I get rid of you? What an idea! Has my behaviour led you to suppose that you are in my way? This handsome, well-educated, rich young man has come under my notice. I see he loves you and you like him and, as I love you and wish to see you sheltered from the storms of fortune and as I think this pleasant young Frenchman would make you happy, I have pointed out to you these advantages but, instead of being grateful, you scold me. Do not weep, sweetheart; you grieve my very soul!"

"I am weeping because you think that I can love him."

"It might be so, dearest, and without my honour taking any hurt; but let us say no more about it and get into bed."

Marcoline's tears changed to smiles and kisses and we said no more about the young wine merchant. The next day he came to our box again, but the scene had changed; she was polite but reserved and I dared not ask him to supper, as I had done the night before. When we had got home, Marcoline thanked me for not doing so, adding that she had been afraid I would.

"What you said last night is a sufficient guide for me for the future."

In the morning Madame Audibert called on behalf of the wine merchant, to ask us to sup with him. I turned towards the fair Venetian and, guessing my thoughts, she hastened to reply that she would be happy to go anywhere in company with Madame Audibert. That lady came for us in the evening and took us to the young man's house, where we found a magnificent supper, but no other guests awaiting us. The house was luxuriously furnished; it lacked only a mistress. The master divided his attention between the two ladies and Marcoline looked ravishing. Everything convinced me that she had evoked the ardour of the worthy young wine merchant.

The next day I received a note from Madame Audibert asking me to call on her. Arrived there, I found she wanted me to give my consent to the marriage of Marcoline with her friend.

"The proposal is a very agreeable one to me," I answered, "and I would willingly give her thirty thousand francs as a dowry, but I can have nothing to do with the matter personally. I will send her to you and, if you can win her over, you may count on my consent, but do not say that you are speaking on my behalf, for that might spoil everything."

"I will come for her and, if you like, she shall dine with me and you can take her to the play in the evening."

Madame Audibert came the following day and Marcoline went to dinner with her. I called for her at five o'clock and, finding her looking pleased and happy, I did not know what to think. As Madame Audibert did not take me aside, I stifled my curiosity and went with Marcoline to the theatre without knowing what had passed.

On the way Marcoline sang the praises of Madame Audibert but did not say a word of the proposal the latter must have made to her. About the middle of the piece, however, I thought I saw the explanation of the riddle, for the young man was in the pit and did not come to our box, though there were two empty seats.

We returned home without a word about the merchant or Madame Audibert but, as I knew in my own mind what had happened, I felt disposed to be grateful and I saw that Marcoline was overjoyed to find me more affectionate than ever. At last, Marcoline, feeling how dearly I loved her, told me what had passed between her and Madame Audibert.

"She spoke to me kindly and sensibly," said she, "but I contented myself with saying that I would never marry till you told me to do so. All the same, I thank you with all my heart for the ten thousand crowns you said you would be willing to give me. You put the decision

up to me and I have passed it back to you. I will return to Venice whenever you please if you will not take me to England with you, but I will never marry. I expect we shall see no more of the young gentleman, though I might have loved him if I had never met you ”

The young wine merchant did not press his suit and I esteemed him for it, for a man who knows his own worth should know how to accept the inevitable.

The wedding day of my late niece came around. Marcoline was there, without diamonds but clad in a rich dress which set off her beauty and satisfied my vanity.

CHAPTER 102

THE wedding interested me only because of the bride. The plentiful rather than choice repast, the numerous and noisy company, the empty compliments, the silly conversation, the roars of laughter at very poor jokes—all this would have driven me to despair if it had not been for Madame Audibert, whom I did not leave for a moment. Marcoline followed the young bride about like a shadow and the latter, who was going to Genoa in a week, wanted to take her with her, promising to have her escorted to Venice by a person of trust, but my sweetheart would listen to no proposal involving her separation from me.

“I won’t go to Venice,” said she, “till you send me there.”

The splendours of her friend’s marriage did not make her experience the least regret at having refused the young wine merchant. The bride beamed with happiness and, on my congratulating her, she confessed her joy to be great, adding that it was increased by the fact that she owed it all to me. She was also very glad to be going to Genoa, where she was sure of finding a true friend in Rosalie, who would sympathise with her, their fortunes having been very similar.

The day after the wedding I began to make preparations for my departure. The first thing I disposed of was the box containing the planetary offerings. I kept the diamonds and precious stones and took all the gold and silver to Rousse de Cosse, who was still holding the sum which Greppi had placed to my credit. I took a bill of exchange on Tourton & Bauer, for I should not be needing any money in Lyons, as Madame d’Urfé was there, and consequently the three hundred louis I had about me would be ample. I acted differently where Marcoline was concerned. I added a sufficient sum to her six hundred louis to give her a capital, in round figures, of fifteen thousand francs. I got a bill drawn on Lyons for that amount, for I intended at the first opportunity to send her back to Venice and with that idea I had her trunks packed separately with all the linen and dresses which I had given her in abundance.

On the eve of our departure we took leave of the newly married couple and the whole family at supper and we parted with tears, promising each other a lifelong friendship.

The next day we set out, intending to travel all night and not stop till we got to Avignon, but about five o'clock the chain of the carriage broke and we could go no further until a wheelwright had repaired the damage. We settled ourselves down to wait patiently and Clairmont went to get information at a fine house on our right, which was approached by an alley of trees. As I had only one postillion, I did not allow him to leave his horses for a moment. Before long we saw Clairmont reappear with two servants, one of whom invited me, on behalf of his master, to await at his house the arrival of the wheelwright. It would have been churlish to refuse this invitation, which was in the true spirit of French politeness, so, leaving Clairmont in charge, Marcoline and I began to wend our way towards the hospitable abode.

Three ladies and two gentlemen came to meet us and one of the gentlemen said they congratulated themselves on my small mishap, since it had enabled Madame to offer me her house and hospitality. I turned towards the lady whom the gentleman had indicated and thanked her, saying that I hoped not to trouble her long, but that I was deeply grateful for her kindness. She made me a graceful curtsy, but I could not make out her features, for a stormy wind was blowing and she and her two friends had drawn their hoods almost entirely over their faces. Marcoline's beautiful head was uncovered and her hair streaming in the breeze. She replied with only graceful bows and smiles to the compliments which were addressed to her on all sides. The gentleman who had first accosted me asked me, as he gave her his arm, if she were my daughter. Marcoline smiled and I answered that she was my cousin and that we were both Venetians.

A Frenchman is so bent on flattering a pretty woman that he will always do so, even if it be at the expense of a third party. Nobody could really think that Marcoline was my daughter, for, though I was twenty years older, I looked ten years younger than my real age, and so Marcoline smiled suggestively.

We were just going into the house when a large mastiff ran towards us, chasing a pretty spaniel, and Madame, afraid the smaller dog would be bitten, began to run, made a false step and fell to the ground. We ran to help her, but she said she had sprained her ankle, and limped into the house on the arm of one of the gentlemen. Refreshments were brought in and I saw that Marcoline looked uneasy in the company of a lady who was talking to her. I hastened to excuse her, saying that she did not speak French. As a matter of fact, Marcoline had begun to talk a sort of French, but the most charming language in the world will not bear being spoken badly, and I had begged her not to speak at all till she had learned to express herself properly. It is better to remain silent than to make strangers laugh by odd expressions and absurd equivocations.

The less pretty—or, rather, the uglier—of the two ladies said it was astonishing that the education of young ladies was neglected in such a shocking manner in Venice. "Fancy not teaching them French!"

"It is certainly very wrong, but in my country young ladies are

taught neither foreign languages nor round games. These important branches of education are attended to afterwards."

"Then you are a Venetian, too?"

"Yes, madame."

"Really, I should not have thought so."

I made a bow in return for this compliment, which in reality was only an insult; for, if flattering to me, it was insulting to the rest of my fellow countrymen and Marcoline thought as much, for she made a little grimace accompanied by a knowing smile.

"I see that the young lady understands French," said our flattering friend. "She laughs in just the right place."

"Yes, she understands it and, as for her laughter, it was due to the fact that she knows me to be like all other Venetians."

"Possibly, but it is easy to see that you have lived a long time in France."

"Yes, madame," said Marcoline, and these words in her pretty Venetian accent were a pleasure to hear.

The gentleman who had taken the lady to her room said she found her foot to be rather swollen and had gone to bed, hoping we would all come upstairs.

We found her lying in a splendid bed, placed in an alcove which the thick curtains of red satin made still darker. I could not see whether she was young or old, pretty or ugly. I said I was very sorry to be the indirect cause of her mishap, and she replied in good Italian that it was a matter of no consequence and that she did not think she could pay too dear for the privilege of entertaining such pleasant guests.

"Your ladyship must have lived in Venice to speak the language with so much correctness."

"No, I have never been there, but I have associated a good deal with Venetians."

A servant came and told me that the wheelwright had arrived and would take four hours to mend my carriage, so I went downstairs. The man lived at a quarter of a league's distance and, by tying the carriage pole with ropes, I could drive to his place and wait there for the carriage to be mended. I was about to do so, when the gentleman who was doing the honours of the house came and asked me, on behalf of the lady, to sup and pass the night at her house, as to go to the wheelwright's would be out of my way; the man would have to work by night, I should be uncomfortable and the work would be ill done. I assented to the countess's proposal and, having agreed with the man that he would come early the next day and bring his tools with him, I told Clairmont to take my belongings into the room which was assigned to me.

When I returned to the countess's room, I found everyone laughing at Marcoline's sallies, which the countess translated. I was not astonished at seeing the way in which my fair Venetian caressed the countess,

but I was enraged at not being able to see her, for I knew Marcoline would not treat any woman in that manner unless she were pretty.

The table was spread in the bedroom of the countess, whom I hoped to see at supper-time, but I was disappointed, for she declared that she could not take anything, and all supper-time she talked to Marcoline and myself, showing intelligence, education and a great knowledge of Italian. She let fall the expression "my late husband," so I knew her to be a widow, but, as I did not dare to ask any questions, my knowledge ended at that point. When Clairmont was undressing me, he told me her married name but, as I knew nothing of the family, that was no addition to my information.

When we had finished supper, Marcoline took up her former position by the countess's bed and they talked so volubly to one another that nobody else could get in a word.

When politeness bade me retire, my pretended cousin said she was going to sleep with the countess. As the latter laughingly assented, I refrained from telling my madcap that she was too forward, and I could see by their mutual embraces that they were agreed in the matter. I satisfied myself with saying that I could not guarantee the sex of the countess's bedfellow, but she answered, "Never mind; if there be a mistake, I shall be the gainer."

This struck me as rather free, but I was not the man to be scandalised. I was amused at the tastes of my fair Venetian and at the manner in which she contrived to gratify them, as she had done at Genoa with my last niece. As a rule the Provençal women are inclined this way and, far from reproaching them, I like them all the better for it.

The next day I rose at daybreak to hurry on the wheelwright and, when the work was done, I asked if the countess were to be seen. Directly after Marcoline came out with one of the gentlemen, who begged me to excuse the countess, as she could not receive me in her extremely scanty attire. "But she hopes that, whenever you are in these parts, you will honour her and her house by your company, whether you are alone or with friends."

This refusal, gilded as it was, was a bitter pill for me to swallow, but I concealed my disgust, as I could put it down only to Marcoline's doings; she seemed in high spirits and I did not like to mortify her. I thanked the gentleman with effusion and, placing a louis in the hands of all the servants present, I took my leave.

I kissed Marcoline affectionately, so that she should not notice my ill humour, and asked how she and the countess spent the night.

"Capitally," said she. "The countess is charming and we amused ourselves all night with the tricks of two amorous women."

"Is she pretty or old?"

"She is only thirty-three and I assure you she is as pretty as my friend Mlle. Crosin. I can speak with authority, for we saw each other in a state of nature."

"You are a singular creature; you were unfaithful to me for a woman and left me to pass the night by myself."

"You must forgive me; I had to sleep with her, as she was the first to declare her love."

"Really? How was that?"

"When I gave her the first of my kisses, she returned it in the Florentine manner. After supper, I confess, I was the first to begin the suggestive caresses, but she met me half way. I could make her happy only by spending the night with her. Look, this will show you how pleased she was."

With these words, Marcoline drew from her finger a superb ring set with brilliants. I was astonished.

"Truly," I said, "this woman is fond of pleasure and deserves to have it."

I gave my Lesbian (who might have vied with Sappho) a hundred kisses and forgave her her infidelity.

"But," I remarked, "I can't think why she did not want to see me. It seems to me that she has treated me rather like a procurer, like 'the prince's friend,' as they say at court."

"No, I think the reason was that she was ashamed to be seen by my lover after having made me unfaithful to him; I had to confess that we were lovers."

"Maybe. At all events you have been well paid; that ring is worth two hundred louis."

"But I may as well tell you that I was well enough paid for the pleasure I gave by the pleasure I received."

"That's fine; I am delighted to see you happy."

"If you want to make me really happy, take me to England with you. My uncle will be there and I could go back to Venice with him."

"What! You have an uncle in England? Do you really mean it? It sounds like a fairy tale. You never told me of it before."

"I have never said anything about it up to now because I always imagined this might prevent your fulfilling my desire?"

"Is your uncle a Venetian? What is he doing in England? Are you sure he will welcome you?"

"Yes."

"What is his name? And how are we to find him in a town of more than a million inhabitants?"

"He is already found. His name is Matteo Bosi and he is *valet de chambre* to M. Querini, the Venetian ambassador sent to England to congratulate the new King; he is accompanied by the procurator Morosini. My uncle is my mother's brother; he is very fond of me and will forgive my fault, especially when he finds I am rich. When he went to England, he said he would be back in Venice in July, and we shall just catch him on the point of departure."

As far as the embassy went, I knew it was all true from the letters I had received from M. de Bragadin and, as for the rest, Marcoline seemed to me to be telling the truth. Her proposal, moreover, flattered my liking for her and I agreed to take her to England, well pleased

to possess her for five or six weeks longer without committing myself to anything beyond that.

We reached Avignon at the close of the day and found ourselves very hungry. I knew that the St. Omer was an excellent inn and, when I got there, I ordered a choice meal, and horses for five o'clock the next morning. Marcoline, who did not like night travelling, was in high glee and threw her arms around my neck, saying, "Are we in Avignon now?"

"Yes, dearest."

"Then I can conscientiously fulfil the promise I made the countess when she embraced me for the last time this morning. She made me swear not to say a word about it till we got to Avignon."

"All this puzzles me, dearest; explain yourself."

"She gave me a letter for you."

"A letter?"

"Will you forgive me for not placing it in your hands sooner?"

"Certainly, if you pledged your word to the countess; but where is this letter?"

"Wait a minute."

She drew a large bundle of papers from her pocket, saying, "This is my certificate of baptism."

"I see you were born in 1746."

"This is a certificate of good conduct."

"Keep it, it may be useful to you"

"This is my certificate of virginity"

"That merchandise is out-of-date. Did you get it from a midwife?"

"No, from the Patriarch of Venice."

"Did he test the matter for himself?"

"No, he was too old; he trusted in me."

"Well, let me see the letter."

"I hope I haven't lost it"

"I hope to God you haven't!"

"Here is your brother's promise of marriage; he wanted to turn Protestant."

"You may throw that into the fire."

"What is a Protestant?"

"I will tell you another time. Give me the letter."

"Praised be God, here it is!"

"That's lucky; but it has no address."

My heart beat fast as I opened it and found, instead of an address, these words in Italian: "To the most honourable man I have met in all my life."

Could this be meant for me? I turned down the leaf and read one word—"Henriette." Nothing else; the rest of the paper was blank.

At the sight of that word I was for a moment annihilated. *Io non mori, e non rimasi vivo.*

"Henriette." It was her style, eloquent in its brevity. I recollected

her last letter from Pontarlier, which I had received in Geneva and which contained only one word—"Farewell!"

Henriette, whom I had loved so well, whom I seemed at that moment to love as well as ever. "Cruel Henriette," said I to myself, "you saw me and would not let me see you. No doubt you thought your charms would not have their old power and feared lest I should discover that, after all, you were but mortal. And yet I love you with all the ardour of my early passion. Why did you not let me learn from your own mouth that you were happy? That is the only question I should have asked you, cruel fair one. I should not have inquired whether you loved me still, for I feel my unworthiness—I, who have loved other women after loving the most perfect of her sex. Adorable Henriette, I will fly to you to-morrow, since you told me I should always be welcome."

I turned these thoughts over in my own mind and fortified myself in this resolve; but at last I said, "No, your behaviour proves that you do not wish to see me now, and your wishes shall be respected; but I must see you once before I die."

Marcoline scarcely dared breathe to see me thus motionless and lost in thought and I do not know when I should have come to myself if the landlord had not come in, saying that he remembered my taste and had got me a delicious supper. This brought me to my senses and I made my fair Venetian happy again by embracing her in a sort of ecstasy.

"Do you know," she said, "you quite frightened me? You were as pale and still as a dead man and remained for a quarter of an hour in a kind of swoon, the like of which I have never seen. What is the reason? I knew that the countess was acquainted with you, but I should never have thought that her name by itself could have such an astonishing effect."

"Well, it is strange; but how did you find out that the countess knew me?"

"She told me as much twenty times over in the night, but she made me promise to say nothing about it till I had given you the letter."

"What did she say to you about me?"

"She only repeated in different ways what she has written for an address"

"What a letter it is! Her name and nothing more."

"It is very strange."

"Yes, but the name tells all."

"She told me that, if I wanted to be happy, I should always remain with you. I said I knew that well, but that you wanted to send me back to Venice, though you were very fond of me. I can guess now that you were lovers. How long ago was it?"

"Sixteen or seventeen years."

"She must have been very young, but she cannot have been prettier than she is now."

"Be quiet, Marcoline."

"Did your union with her last long?"

"We lived together four months in perfect happiness."

"I shall not be happy for so long as that."

"Yes, you will, and longer, too, but with another man and one more suitable to you in age. I am going to England to try to get my daughter from her mother."

"Your daughter? The countess asked me if you were married and I said no."

"You were right. She is my illegitimate daughter. She must be ten now and, when you see her, you will confess that she must belong to me."

Just as we were sitting down to table, we heard someone going downstairs to the *table d'hôte* in the room where I had made Madame Stuard's acquaintance. Our door was open and we could see the people on the stairs and one of them, seeing us, gave a cry of joy and came running in, exclaiming, "My dear papa!" I turned to the light and saw Irene, the same whom I had treated so rudely at Genoa after my discussion with her father about biribi. I embraced her effusively and the sly little puss, pretending to be surprised to see Marcoline, made her a profound bow, which was returned with much grace. Marcoline listened attentively to our conversation.

"What are you doing here, fair Irene?"

"We have been here for the last fortnight. Good heavens, how lucky I am to find you again! I am quite weak. Will you allow me to sit down, madame?"

"Yes, yes, my dear," said I, "sit down." And I gave her a glass of wine, which restored her.

A waiter came up and said they were waiting for her at supper, but she said, "I won't take any supper." And Marcoline, always desirous of pleasing me, ordered a third place to be laid. I made her happy with an approving nod.

We sat down to table and ate our meal with great appetite. "When we have done," I said to Irene, "you must tell us what chance has brought you to Avignon."

Marcoline, who had not spoken a word hitherto, noticing how hungry Irene was, said pleasantly that it would have been a mistake if she had not taken any supper. Irene was delighted to hear Venetian spoken and thanked her for her kindness and in three or four minutes they had kissed and become friends.

It amused me to see the way in which Marcoline always fell in love with pretty women, just as if she had been a man.

In the course of conversation I found that Irene's father and mother were at the *table d'hôte* below, and from sundry exclamations, such as, "You have been brought to Avignon out of God's goodness," I learned that they were in distress. In spite of that, Irene's mirthful countenance matched Marcoline's sallies and the latter was delighted to hear that Irene had called me "papa" only because her mother had styled her my daughter in Milan.

We had got only half way through our supper when Rinaldi and

his wife came in. I asked them to sit down but, if it had not been for Irene, I should have given the old rascal a very warm reception. He began to chide his daughter for troubling me with her presence when I had such fair company already, but Marcoline hastened to say that Irene could only have given me pleasure, for in my capacity of her uncle I was always glad when she was able to enjoy the society of a sweet young girl.

"I hope," she added, "that, if she doesn't mind, she will sleep with me."

"Yes, yes," resounded on all sides and, though I should have preferred to sleep with Marcoline by herself, I laughed and agreed, I have always been able to accommodate myself to circumstances.

Irene shared Marcoline's desires, for, when it was settled that they should sleep together, they seemed wild with joy and I added fuel to the fire by plying them with punch and champagne.

Rinaldi and his wife did not leave us till they were quite drunk. When we had got rid of them, Irene told us how a Frenchman had fallen in love with her in Genoa and had persuaded her father to go to Nice, where high play was going on, but, meeting with no luck there, she had been obliged to sell what she had to pay the innkeeper. Her lover had assured her he would make it up to her at Aix, where there was some money owing to him, and she persuaded her father to go there; but, the persons who owed the money having gone to Avignon, there had to be another sale of goods.

"When we got there, the luck was no better and the poor young man, whom my father reproached bitterly, would have killed himself if I had not given him the mantle you gave me, that he might pawn it and go on his quest. He got four louis for it and sent me the ticket with a very tender letter, in which he assured me he would find some money in Lyons and would then return and take us to Bordeaux, where we are to find treasures. In the meanwhile we are penniless and, as we have nothing more to sell, the landlord threatens to turn us out naked."

"And what does your father mean to do?"

"I don't know. He says Providence will take care of us."

"What does your mother say?"

"Oh! she is quite calm, as usual."

"How about yourself?"

"Alas, I have to bear a thousand mortifications every day! They are continually reproaching me for having fallen in love with this Frenchman and bringing them to this dreadful pass."

"Were you really in love with him?"

"Yes, really."

"Then you must be very unhappy."

"Yes, very; but not on account of my love, for I shall get cured of that in time, but because of what will happen to-morrow."

"Can't you make any conquests at the *table d'hôte*?"

"Some of the men say pretty things to me but, as they all know how poor we are, they are afraid to come to our room."

"And yet, in spite of all, you keep cheerful; you don't look sad like most unhappy persons! I congratulate you on your good spirits."

Irene's tale was like the fair Stuard's story over again and Marcoline, though she had taken rather too much champagne, was deeply moved at this picture of misery. She kissed the girl, telling her I would not forsake her and that in the meanwhile they would spend a pleasant night.

"Come, let us to bed!" said she, and, after taking off her clothes, she helped Irene to undress. I had no wish to fight against two and said I needed to rest. The fair Venetian burst out laughing and said, "Go to bed and leave us alone."

I did so and amused myself by watching the two Bacchantes.

We fell asleep and I did not wake till noon and then I saw my two beauties still asleep, with their limbs interlaced like two branches of honeysuckle. I thought, with a sigh, of the pleasures of such a sleep and got out of bed gently for fear of rousing them. I ordered a good dinner to be prepared and countermanded the horses which had been waiting several hours.

The landlord, remembering what I had done for Madame Stuard, guessed I was going to do the same for the Rinaldis and left them in peace.

When I came back, I found my two Lesbians awake. I did nothing and bore their sarcasms in silence till one o'clock, when I told them to get up, as we ought to have gone at five in the morning and it would be two o'clock before we breakfasted.

"We have enjoyed ourselves," said Marcoline, "and time that is given to enjoyment is never wasted."

When they were dressed, I had coffee brought in and I gave Irene sixteen louis, four of which were to redeem her cloak. Her father and mother, who had just dined, came in to bid us good day and Irene proudly gave her father twelve louis, telling him to scold her a little less in future. He laughed, wept and went out and then came back and said he had found a good way of getting to Antibes at small cost, but they would have to go directly, as the driver wanted to get to St. Andiol by nightfall.

"I am quite ready."

"No, dear Irene," said I, "you shall not go; you shall dine with your friend and your driver can wait. Make him do so, Count Rinaldi; my niece will pay, will you not, Marcoline?"

"Certainly. I should like to dine here and still better to put off our departure till to-morrow."

Her wishes were my orders. We had a delicious supper at five o'clock and at eight we went to bed and spent the night in wantonness, but at five in the morning all were ready to start. Irene, who wore her handsome cloak, shed hot tears at parting from Marcoline, who also wept with all her heart. Old Rinaldi, who proved himself no prophet, told me I should make a great fortune in England, and his daughter sighed to be in Marcoline's place. We shall hear of Rinaldi later on.

We drove on for fifteen posts without stopping and passed the night at Valence. The food was bad, but Marcoline forgot her discomfort in talking of Irene.

"Do you know," said she, "that, if it had been in my power, I should have taken her from her parents. I believe she is your daughter, though she is not like you."

"How can she be my daughter when I have never known her mother?"

"She made the same remark."

"Didn't she tell you anything else?"

"Yes, she told me you lived with her for three days and bought her virginity for a thousand sequins."

"Quite so, but did she tell you that I paid the money to her father?"

"Yes, the little fool doesn't keep anything for herself. I don't think I should ever be jealous of your mistresses if you let me sleep with them. Is not that a mark of a good disposition? Tell me."

"You have, no doubt, a good disposition, but you could be quite as good without your dominant passion."

"It is not a passion. I have desires only for those I love."

"Who gave you this taste?"

"Nature. I began at seven and in the last ten years I have certainly had four hundred sweethearts."

"You began early. But when did you begin to have male sweethearts?"

"At eleven."

"Tell me all about it."

"Father Molini, a monk, was my confessor and he expressed a desire to know the girl who was then my sweetheart. It was carnival time and he gave us a moral discourse, telling us he would take us to the play if we would promise to abstain for a week. We promised to do so and at the end of the week we went to tell him that we had kept our word faithfully. The next day Father Molini called on my sweetheart's aunt in a mask and, as she knew him and he was a monk and a confessor, we were allowed to go with him. Besides, we were mere children; my sweetheart was only a year older than I."

"After the play the father took us to an inn and gave us some supper and, when the meal was over, he spoke to us of our sin and wanted to examine us. 'It's a great sin between two girls,' said he, 'but between a man and a woman it is a venial matter.' In the course of an hour the good father had turned us into women. I must confess that he understood so well how to work on our curiosity that the request came from us. Three years later, when I was fourteen, I became the mistress of a young jeweller. Then came your brother, but he got nothing from me because he began by saying that he could not ask me to give him any favours till we were married."

"You must have been amused at that."

"Yes, it did make me laugh because I did not know that a priest could get married and he excited my curiosity by telling me it could be

arranged in Geneva. Curiosity and wantonness made me run off with him; you know the rest."

Thus did Marcoline amuse me during the evening and then we went to bed and slept quietly till morning. We started from Valence at five and in the evening we arrived at the Hôtel du Parc in Lyons.

As soon as I was settled in the pleasant apartments allotted to me, I went to see Madame d'Urfé, who was staying in the Place Bellecour, and she said, as usual, that she had been sure I was coming on that day. She wanted to know if she had performed the ceremonies correctly, and *Paralis* of course informed her that she had, whereat she was much flattered. The young Aranda was with her and, after I had kissed him affectionately, I told the marchioness I would be with her at ten o'clock the next morning, and so I left her.

I kept the appointment and we spent the whole of the day in close conference, asking of the oracle concerning her being brought to bed, how she was to make her will and how she should contrive to escape poverty in her regenerated shape. The oracle told her that she must go to Paris for her lying-in and leave all her possessions to her son, who would not be a bastard, as *Paralis* promised that, as soon as I got to London, an English gentleman would be sent over to marry her. Finally, the oracle ordered her to prepare to start in three days and to take Aranda with her. I had to take the latter to London and return him to his mother, for his real position in life was no longer a mystery, the little ingrate having confessed all; however, I had found a remedy for his indiscretion, as for the treachery of the Corticelli and Possano.

I longed the more to return the young ingrate to the keeping of his mother as she was continually writing me impertinent letters. I also wished to take out of her hands my daughter, who, according to her mother, had become a prodigy of grace and beauty and talent.

After the oracular business had been settled, I returned to the Hôtel du Parc to dine with Marcoline. It was very late and, as I could not take my sweetheart to the play, I called on M. Bono to inquire whether he had sent my brother to Paris. He told me he had gone the day before and that my great enemy, Possano, was still in Lyons and I would do well to be on my guard as far as he was concerned.

"I have seen him," said Bono. "He looks pale and undone and seems scarcely able to stand. 'I shall die before long,' said he, 'for that scoundrel Casanova has had me poisoned; but I will make him pay dearly for his crime and in this very town of Lyons, where I know he will come sooner or later.'

"In fact, in the course of half an hour, he made some terrible accusations against you, speaking as if he were in a fury. He wants all the world to know that you are the greatest villain unhung, that you are ruining Madame d'Urfé with your impious lies, that you are a sorcerer, a forger, an utterer of false moneys, a poisoner—in short, the worst of men. He does not intend to publish a libellous pamphlet upon you, but to accuse you before the courts, alleging that he wants reparation for the wrongs you have done his person, his honour and his life,

for he says you are killing him by a slow poison. He adds that for every article of his accusation he possesses the strongest proof.

"I will say nothing about the vague abuse he adds to these formal accusations, but I have felt it my duty to warn you of his treacherous designs, that you may be able to defeat them. It's no good saying he is a miserable wretch and that you despise him; you know how strong a thing calumny is."

"Where does the fellow live?"

"I don't know in the least."

"How can I find out?"

"I can't say, for, if he is hiding himself on purpose, it would be hard to get at him."

"Nevertheless, Lyons is not so vast a place."

"Lyons is a perfect maze and there is no better hiding-place, especially for a man with money and Possano has money."

"But what can he do to me?"

"He can institute proceedings against you in the criminal court, which would cause you immense anxiety and bring down your good name to the dust, even though you be the most innocent and just of men."

"It seems to me, then, the best thing I can do will be to be first in the field."

"So I think, but even then you cannot avoid publicity."

"Tell me frankly if you feel disposed to bear witness to what the rascal has said in a court of justice."

"I will tell all I know with perfect truth."

"Be kind enough to tell me of a good lawyer."

"I will give you the address of one of the best, but reflect before you do anything. The affair will make a noise."

"As I don't know where he lives, I have really no choice in the matter."

If I had known where he lived, I could have had Possano expelled from Lyons through the influence of Madame d'Urfé, whose relative, M. de la Rochebaron, was the governor; but, as it was, I had no other course than the one I took.

Although Possano was a liar and an ungrateful, treacherous hound, yet I could not help being uneasy. I went to my hotel and proceeded to ask for police protection against a man in hiding in Lyons who had designs against my life and honour.

The next day M. Bono came to dissuade me from the course I had taken.

"For," said he, "the police will begin to search for him and, as soon as he hears of it, he will take proceedings against you in the criminal courts and then your positions will be changed. It seems to me that, if you have no important business in Lyons, you had better hasten your departure."

"Do you think I would do such a thing for a miserable fellow like Possano? No! I would despise myself if I did. I would die rather than

hasten my departure on account of a rascal whom I loaded with kindnesses, despite his unworthiness! I would give a hundred louis to know where he is now."

"I am delighted to say that I do not know anything about it, for, if I did, I would tell you and then God knows what would happen. You won't go any sooner, well, then, begin proceedings and I will give my evidence by word of mouth or writing whenever you please."

I went to the lawyer whom M. Bono had recommended to me and told him my business. When he heard what I wanted, he said:

"I can do nothing for you, sir, as I have undertaken your opponent's case. You need not be alarmed, however, at having spoken to me, for I assure you that I will make no use whatever of the information Possano's plea or accusation will not be drawn up till the day after to-morrow, but I will not tell him to make haste for fear of your anticipating him, as I have been informed of your intentions only by chance. However, you will find plenty of attorneys in Lyons as honest as I am, and more skilled."

"Could you give me the name of one?"

"That would not be etiquette, but M. Bono, who seems to have kindly spoken of me with some esteem, will be able to serve you."

"Can you tell me where your client lives?"

"Since his chief aim is to remain hidden, and with good cause, you will see that I could not think of doing such a thing."

"You are right and I thank you for it."

In bidding him farewell, I put a louis on the table and, though I did it with the utmost delicacy, he ran after me and made me take it back.

"For once in a way," I said to myself, "here's an honest lawyer!"

As I walked along, I thought of putting a spy on Possano and finding out his abode, for I felt a strong desire to have him beaten to death; but where was I to find a spy in a town of which I knew nothing? M. Bono gave me the name of another attorney-at-law and advised me to make haste.

"'Tis a criminal matter," said he, "and in such cases the first comer always has the advantage."

I asked him to find me a trusty fellow to track out the rascally Possano, but the worthy man would not hear of it. He explained that it would be dishonourable to set a spy on the actions of Possano's counsel. I knew it myself; but what man is there who has not yielded to the voice of vengeance, the most violent and least reasonable of all the passions?

I went to the second lawyer, whom I found to be a man venerable not only in years, but in wisdom. I told him all the circumstances of the affair, which he agreed to take up, saying he would present my plea in the course of the day.

"That's just what I want you to do," said I, "for his own counsel told me that his pleas would be presented the day after to-morrow."

"That, sir," said he, "would not induce me to act with any greater

promptness, as I could not consent to your abusing the confidence of my colleague."

"But there is nothing dishonourable in making use of information which one has acquired by chance."

"That may be a tenable position in some cases, but in the present instance the nature of the affair justifies prompt action *Prior in tempore, potior in jure*. Prudence bids us attack our enemy. Be so kind, if you please, as to call here at three o'clock this afternoon."

"I will not fail to do so and in the meanwhile here are six louis."

"I will keep account of my expenditure on your behalf."

"I want you to spare no money."

"Sir, I shall spend only what is absolutely necessary."

I almost believed that probity had chosen a home for herself among the lawyers of Lyons, and here I may say, to the honour of the French bar, that nowhere have I found lawyers as honest as in France.

At three o'clock, having seen that the plea was properly drawn up, I went to Madame d'Urfé's and for four hours I worked the oracle in a manner that filled her with delight, and, in spite of my vexation, I could not help laughing at her insane fancies on the subject of pregnancy. She was certain of it; she felt all the symptoms. Then she said how sorry she felt that she would not be alive to laugh at all the hypotheses of the Paris doctors as to her being delivered of a child, which would be thought very extraordinary in a woman of her age.

When I got back to the inn, I found Marcoline very melancholy. She said she had been waiting for me to take her to the play, according to my promise, and that I should not have made her wait in vain.

"You are right, dearest, but an affair of importance has kept me with the marchioness. Be calm and reasonable."

I had need of some such advice myself, for the legal affair worried me and I slept very ill. Early next morning I saw my counsel, who told me that my plea had been laid before the criminal lieutenant.

"For the present," said he, "there is nothing more to be done, for, since we don't know where he is, we can't cite him to appear."

"Could I not set the police on his track?"

"You might, but I don't advise you to do so. Let us consider what the result would be. The accuser, finding himself accused, would have to defend himself and prove the accusation he has made against you. But in the present state of things, if he does not put in an appearance, we will get judgment against him for contempt of court and also for libel. Even his counsel will leave him in the lurch if he persistently refuses to show himself."

This quieted my fears a little and I spent the rest of the day with Madame d'Urfé, who was going to Paris on the morrow. I promised to join her there as soon as I had dealt with certain matters which concerned the honour of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross.

Her great maxim was always to respect my secrets and never to trouble me with her curiosity. Marcoline, who had been pining by her-

self all day, breathed again when I told her that henceforth I should be all for her.

In the morning M. Bono came to me and begged me to go with him to Possano's counsel, who wanted to speak to me. The lawyer said his client was a sort of madman who was ready to do anything, as he believed himself to be dying from the effects of a slow poison.

"He says that, even if you are first in the field, he will have you condemned to death. He says he doesn't care if he is sent to prison, as he is certain of coming out in triumph, since he has the proof of all his accusations. He shows twenty-five louis which you gave him, all of which are clipped, and he exhibits documents dated from Genoa stating that you clipped a number of gold pieces, which were melted by M. Grimaldi in order that the police might not find them in your possession. He has even a letter from your brother, the abbé, deposing against you. He is a madman, a victim of syphilis, who wishes if he can to send you to the other world before himself. Now, my advice to you is to give him some money and get rid of him. He tells me that he is the father of a family and that, if M. Bono would give him a thousand louis, he would sacrifice vengeance to necessity. He told me to speak to M. Bono about it. Now, sir, what do you say?"

"That which my just indignation inspires me to say regarding a rascal whom I rescued from poverty and who nevertheless pursues me with atrocious calumnies—he shall not have one single farthing of mine."

I then told the Genoa story, putting things in their true light and adding that I would call M. Grimaldi as a witness if necessary.

"I have delayed presenting the plea," said the counsel, "to see if the scandal could be hushed up in any way, but I warn you that I shall now present it."

"Do so, I shall be greatly obliged to you."

I immediately called on my attorney and told him of the rascal's proposal and he said I was quite right to refuse to have any dealings with such a fellow. He added that, as I had M. Bono as a witness, I ought to make Possano's counsel present his plea, since he said it was drawn up and ready. I authorised him to make such a demand in my name.

A clerk was immediately sent to the criminal lieutenant, praying him to command the lawyer to bring before him within three days the plea of one "Anami, alias Pogomas, alias Possano," the said plea being against "Jacques Casanova, commonly called the Chevalier de Seingalt." This document, to which I affixed my signature, was laid before the criminal lieutenant.

I did not care for the three days' delay, but my counsel told me it was always given and that I must make up my mind to submit to the vexations I should be obliged to undergo even if we were wholly successful.

As Madame d'Urfé had taken her departure in conformity with the orders of *Paralis*, I dined with Marcoline at the inn and tried to raise

my spirits by all the means in my power. I took my mistress to the best milliners and dressmakers in the town and bought her everything she took a fancy to and then we went to the theatre, where she must have been pleased to see all eyes fixed on her. Madame Pernon, who was in the next box to ours, had me introduce Marcoline to her and, from the way they embraced each other when the play was over, I saw they were likely to become intimate, the only obstacle to their friendship being that Madame Pernon did not know a word of Italian and Marcoline did not dare to speak a word of French, for fear of making herself ridiculous. When we got back to the inn, Marcoline told me that her new friend had given her the Florentine kiss, this is the shibboleth of the sect.

The pretty nicknacks I had given her had made her happy; her ardour was redoubled and the night passed joyously.

I spent the next day in going from shop to shop, making fresh purchases for Marcoline, and we supped merrily at Madame Pernon's.

The day after M. Bono came to see me at an early hour, with a smile of content on his face.

"Let us go and breakfast at a coffee-house," said he. "We will have some discussion together."

While we were breakfasting, he showed me a letter written by Possano, in which the rascal said he was ready to abandon proceedings provided M. de Seingalt gave him a hundred louis, on receipt of which he promised to leave Lyons immediately.

"I should be a great fool," said I, "if I gave the knave more money to escape from the hands of justice. Let him go if he likes; I won't prevent him, but he had better not expect me to give him anything. We will have a writ out against him to-morrow. I should like to see him branded by the hangman. He has slandered me, his benefactor, too grievously; let him prove what he says or be dishonoured before all men."

"His abandoning the proceedings," said M. Bono, "would in my opinion amount to the same thing as his failing to prove his charges and you would do well to prefer it to a trial, which would do your reputation no good even if you were completely successful. And the hundred louis is nothing in comparison with the costs of such a trial."

"M. Bono, I value your advice very highly and still more highly the kindly feelings which prompt you, but you must allow me to follow my own opinion in this case."

I went to my counsel and told him of the fresh proposal that Possano had made and of my refusal to listen to it, begging him to take measures for the arrest of the villain who had vowed my death.

The same evening I had Madame Pernon and M. Bono, who was her lover, to sup with me and, as the latter had a good knowledge of Italian, Marcoline was able to take part in the merriment of the company.

The next day Bono wrote to tell me that Possano had left Lyons never to return and had signed a full and satisfactory retraction. I was

not surprised to hear of his flight, but the other circumstance I could not understand. I therefore hastened to call on Bono, who showed me the document, which was certainly plain enough.

"Will that do?" said he.

"So well that I forgive him, but I wonder he did not insist on the hundred louis."

"My dear sir, I gave him the money with pleasure, to prevent a scandalous affair which would have done us all harm in becoming public. If I had told you nothing, you couldn't have taken any steps in the matter and I felt myself obliged to repair the mischief I had done in this way. I would have said nothing about this little sacrifice on my part if you had said that you were not satisfied. I am only too glad to have been able to show my friendship by this trifling service. We will say no more about it."

"Very good," said I, embracing him, "we will say no more, but please to receive the assurance of my gratitude."

I confess I felt much relieved at being freed from this troublesome business.

CHAPTER 103

THUS freed from the cares which the dreadful slanders of Possano had caused me, I gave myself up to the enjoyment of my fair Venetian, doing all in my power to increase her happiness, as if I had had a premonition that we should soon be separated from one another.

The day after the supper I gave to Madame Pernon and M. Bono, we went to the theatre together and in the box opposite to us I saw M. Querini, the procurator Morosini, M. Memmo and Count Stratico, a professor of the University of Padua. I knew all these gentlemen; they had been in London and were passing through Lyons on their return to Venice. "Farewell, fair Marcoline!" I said to myself, feeling quite broken-hearted, but I remained outwardly calm and said nothing to her. She did not notice anything, as she was absorbed in her conversation with M. Bono and, besides, she did not know these gentlemen by sight. I saw that M. Memmo had seen me and was telling the procurator of my presence and, as I knew the latter very well, I felt bound to pay them my respects then and there.

Querini received me very politely for a very religious man, as did also Morosini, while Memmo seemed moved; but no doubt he remembered that it was chiefly due to his mother that I had been imprisoned eight years before.

I congratulated the gentlemen on their embassy to England and their return to their native land and for form's sake I commended myself to their good offices to enable me to return also. M. Morosini, noticing the richness of my dress and my general appearance of prosperity, said that, while I had to stay away, he had to return and that he considered me the luckier man.

"Your excellency is well aware," said I, "that nothing is sweeter than forbidden fruit."

He smiled and asked me whither I was going and whence I came.

"I come from Rome," I answered, "where I had some converse with the Holy Father, whom I knew before, and I am going through Paris on my way to London."

"Call on me here if you have time. I have a little commission to give you."

"I shall always have time to serve your excellency. Are you stopping here long?"

"Three or four days."

When I got back to my box, Marcoline asked me who were the gentlemen to whom I had been speaking. I answered coolly and indifferently, but watching her as I spoke, that they were the Venetian ambassadors on their way from London. The flush of her cheek died away and was replaced by pallor; she raised her eyes to Heaven, lowered them and said not a word. My heart was broken. A few minutes afterwards she asked me which was M. Querini and, after I had pointed him out to her, she watched him furtively for the rest of the evening.

The curtain fell, we left our box and at the door of the theatre we found the ambassadors waiting for their carriage. Mine was in the same line as theirs. The ambassador Querini said, "You have a very pretty young lady with you."

Marcoline stepped forward, seized his hand and kissed it before I could answer.

Querini, who was greatly astonished, thanked her and said, "What have I done to deserve this honour?"

"Because," said Marcoline, speaking in the Venetian dialect, "I have the honour of knowing His Excellency M. Querini."

"What are you doing with M. Casanova?"

"He is my uncle."

My carriage came up. I made a profound bow to the ambassadors and called out to the coachman, "To the Hôtel du Parc." It was the best hotel in Lyons and I was not sorry for the Venetians to hear where I was staying.

Marcoline was in despair, for she saw that the time for parting was near at hand.

"We have three or four days before us," said I, "in which we can contrive how to communicate with your uncle Matteo. I must commend you highly for kissing M. Querini's hand. That was a master stroke, indeed. I foresee that all will go well; but I hope you will be merry, for I abhor sadness."

We were still at table when I heard the voice of M. Memmo in the ante-chamber, he was a young man, intelligent and good-natured. I warned Marcoline not to say a word about our private affairs, but to display a moderate gaiety. The servant announced the young nobleman and we rose to welcome him; but he made us sit down again and sat beside us and drank a glass of wine with the utmost cordiality. He

told me how he had been supping with the old devotee Querini, who had had his hand kissed by a young and fair Venetian. The ambassadors were much amused at the circumstance and Querini himself, in spite of his scrupulous conscience, was greatly flattered.

"May I ask you, mademoiselle," he added, "how you came to know M. Querini?"

"It's a mystery, sir."

"A mystery, is it? What fun we shall have to-morrow! I have come," he said, addressing himself to me, "to ask you to dine with us to-morrow and you must bring your charming niece."

"Would you like to go, Marcoline?"

"*Con grandissimo piacere!* We shall speak Venetian, shall we not?"

"Certainly."

"*Evviva!* I cannot learn French."

"M. Querini is in the same predicament," said M. Memmo.

After half an hour's agreeable conversation he left us and Marcoline embraced me with delight at having made such a good impression on these gentlemen.

"Put on your best dress to-morrow," said I, "and do not forget your jewels. Be agreeable to everybody but pretend not to see your uncle Matteo, who will be sure to be waiting on the table."

"You may be sure I shall follow your advice to the letter."

"And I mean to make the recognition a scene worthy of the drama. I intend that you shall be taken back to Venice by M. Querini himself, while your uncle will take care of you by his special orders."

"I shall be delighted with this arrangement, provided it succeeds."

"You may trust to me for that."

At nine o'clock the next day I called on Morosini concerning the commission he had for me. He gave me a little box and a letter for Lady Harrington and another letter with the words, "The Procurator Morosini is very sorry not to have been able to take a last leave of Mlle. Charpillon."

"Where shall I find her?"

"I really don't know. If you find her, give her the letter; if not, it doesn't matter. That's a dazzling beauty you have with you, Casanova."

"Well, she has dazzled me."

"But how did she know Querini?"

"She has seen him in Venice, but she has never spoken to him."

"I thought so; we have been laughing over it, but Querini is hugely pleased. How did you get hold of her? She must be very young, as Memmo says she cannot speak French."

"It would be a long story to tell and, after all, we met through a mere chance."

"She is not your niece."

"Nay, she is more, she is my queen."

"You will have to teach her French, as, when you get to London . . ."

"I am not going to take her there; she wants to return to Venice."

"I pity you if you are in love with her! I hope she will dine with us?"

"Oh, yes! She is delighted with the honour."

"And we are delighted to have our poor repast animated by such a charming person."

"You will find her worthy of your company; she is full of wit."

When I got back to the inn, I told Marcoline that, if anything was said at dinner about her return to Venice, she was to reply that no one could make her return except M. Querini, but that, if she could have his protection, she would gladly go back with him.

"I will get you out of the difficulty," said I. And she promised to carry out my instructions.

Marcoline followed my advice with regard to her toilette and looked brilliant in all respects, and I, wishing to shine in the eyes of the proud Venetian nobles, had dressed myself with the utmost richness. I wore a suit of grey velvet, trimmed with gold and silver lace, my point-lace shirt was worth at least fifty louis, and my diamonds, my watches, my chains, my sword of the finest English steel, my snuffbox set with brilliants, my cross set with diamonds, my buckles set with the same stones were all together worth more than fifty thousand crowns. This ostentation, though puerile in itself, yet had a purpose, for I wished M. de Bragadin to know that I did not cut a bad figure in the world, and I wished the proud magistrates who had made me quit my native land without other resources than my native wit to learn that I had made my own way so well that I could laugh at their severity.

In this gorgeous style we drove to the ambassadors' dinner at half-past one.

All present were Venetians and they welcomed Marcoline enthusiastically. Born with the instinct for good manners, she behaved with the grace of a nymph and the dignity of a French princess and, as soon as she was seated between two grave and reverend signors, she began by saying that she was delighted to find herself the only representative of her sex in this distinguished company and also that there were no Frenchmen present.

"Then you don't like the French," said M. Memmo.

"I like them well enough as far as I know them, but I am acquainted only with their exterior, as I don't speak or understand the language."

After this, everybody knew how to take her and the gaiety became general.

She answered all questions to the point and entertained the company with her remarks on French manners, so different to Venetian customs.

In the course of dinner M. Querini asked how she had known him, and she replied that she had often seen him at divine service, whereat the devotee seemed greatly flattered. M. Morosini, pretending not to know that she was to return to Venice, told her that, unless she made haste to acquire French, the universal language, she would find London very tedious, as the Italian language was very little known there.

"I hope," she replied, "that M. de Seingalt will not take me into the society of people with whom I cannot exchange ideas. I know I shall never be able to learn French."

When we had left the table, the ambassadors begged me to tell the story of my escape from The Leads and I was glad to oblige them. My story lasted two whole hours and it was noticed that Marcoline's eyes became wet with tears when I came to speak of my great danger. She was rallied upon this circumstance and told that nieces were not usually so emotional.

"That may be, gentlemen," she replied, "though I do not see why a niece should not love her uncle. But I have never loved anyone else but the hero of that tale and I cannot see what difference there can be between one kind of love and another."

"There are five kinds of love known to man," said M. Querini. "The love of one's neighbour, the love of God (which is beyond compare the highest of all), conjugal love, the love of house and home and the love of self, which ought to come last of all, though many place it in the first rank."

The nobleman commented briefly on these diverse kinds of love, but, when he came to the love of God, he began to soar and I was greatly astonished to see Marcoline shedding tears, which she wiped away hastily, as if to hide them from the sight of the worthy old man, whom wine had made more theological than usual. Feigning to be enthusiastic, Marcoline took his hand and kissed it, while he in his vain exaltation drew her towards him and kissed her on the brow, saying, "*Poveretta*, you are an angel!"

At this incident, in which there was more love of one's neighbour than love of God, we all bit our lips to prevent ourselves from bursting out laughing and the sly little puss pretended to be extremely moved.

I never knew Marcoline's capacities till then, for she confessed that her emotion was wholly fictitious and designed to win the old man's good graces and that, if she had followed her own inclinations, she would have laughed heartily. She was designed to act a part either upon the stage or on a throne. Chance had ordained that she should be born of the people and her education had been neglected but, if she had been properly tutored, she would have been fit for anything.

Before returning home, we were warmly invited to dinner the next day.

As we wanted to be together, we did not go to the theatre that evening and, when we got home, I did not wait for Marcoline to undress to cover her with kisses.

"Dear heart," said I, "you have not shown me all your perfections till now when we are about to part; you make me regret you are going back to Venice. To-day you won all hearts."

"Keep me, then, with you and I will ever be as I have been to-day. By the way, did you see my uncle?"

"I think so. Was it not he who was in continual attendance?"

"Yes. I recognised him by his ring. Did he look at me?"

"All the time and with an air of the greatest astonishment. I avoided catching his eye, which roved from you to me continually."

"I should like to know what the good man thinks! You will see him

again to-morrow. I am sure he will have told M. Querini that I am his niece and consequently not yours."

"I expect so, too."

"And, if M. Querini says as much to me to-morrow, I expect I shall have to admit the fact. What do you think?"

"You must undoubtedly tell him the truth, but frankly and openly and so as not to let him think that you have need of him to return to Venice. He is not your father and has no control over your liberty."

"Certainly not."

"Very good. You must also admit that I am not your uncle and that the bond between us is of the tenderest description. Will there be any difficulty in that?"

"How can you ask me such a question? The link between us makes me feel proud and ever will."

"Well, I say no more. I trust entirely to your tact. Remember that Querini, and no other, must take you back to Venice; he must treat you as if you were his daughter. If he will not consent, you shall not return at all."

"Would to God it were so!"

Early the next morning I got a note from M. Querini requesting me to call on him, as he wanted to speak to me on a matter of importance

"We are getting on," said Marcoline. "I am very glad things have taken this turn, for, when you come back, you can tell me the whole story and I can regulate my conduct accordingly."

I found Querini and Morosini together. They gave me their hands when I came in, and Querini asked me to sit down, saying that there would be nothing in our discussion which M. Morosini might not hear.

"I have a confidence to make to you, M. Casanova," he began, "but first I want you to do me the same favour."

"I can have no secrets from your excellency."

"I am obliged to you and will try to deserve your good opinion. I beg that you will tell me sincerely whether you know the young person who is with you, for no one believes she is your niece."

"It is true that she is not my niece but, not being acquainted with her relatives or family, I cannot be said to know her in the sense which your excellency gives to the word. Nevertheless, I am proud to confess that I love her with an affection which will only end with my life."

"I am delighted to hear you say so. How long have you had her?"

"Nearly two months."

"Very good! How did she fall into your hands?"

"That is a point which concerns only her and you will allow me not to answer that question."

"Good! we will pass that over. Though you are in love with her, it is quite possible that you never had the curiosity to make any inquiries respecting her family."

"She has told me that she has a father and a mother, poor but honest, but I confess I have never been inquisitive enough to inquire their

name I know only her baptismal name, which may not be her true one but does quite well for me."

"She has given you her true name."

"Your excellency surprises me! You know her then?"

"Yes; I did not know her yesterday, but I do now. Two months . . . Marcoline . . . yes, it must be she. I am now certain that my man is not mad."

"Your man?"

"Yes; she is his niece. When we were in London, he heard that she had left the paternal roof about the middle of Lent. Marcoline's mother, who is his sister, wrote to him. He was afraid to speak to her yesterday because she looked so grand. He even thought he must be mistaken, and he would have been afraid of offending me by speaking to a grand lady at my table. She must have seen him, too."

"I don't think so; she said nothing about it to me."

"It is true that he was standing behind her all the time. But let us come to the point. Is Marcoline your wife or have you any intention of marrying her?"

"I love her as tenderly as any man can love a woman, but I cannot make her a wife, the reasons are known only to herself and me."

"I respect your secret; but tell me if you would object to my begging her to return to Venice with her uncle?"

"I think Marcoline is happy but, if she has succeeded in gaining the favour of your excellency, she is happier still; and I feel sure that, if she were to go back to Venice under the exalted patronage of your excellency, she would efface all stains on her reputation. As to permitting her to go, I can put no stumbling-block in the way, for I am not her master. As her lover, I would defend her to the last drop of my blood but, if she wants to leave me, I can only assent, though with sorrow."

"You speak with much sense and I hope you will not be displeased at my undertaking this good work. Of course I shall do nothing without your consent."

"I respect the decrees of fate when they are promulgated by such a man as you. If your excellency can induce Marcoline to leave me, I will make no objection, but I warn you that she must be won mildly. She is intelligent, she loves me and she knows that she is independent; besides, she reckons on me and she has cause to do so. Speak to her to-day by herself; my presence would only be in your way. Wait till dinner is over; the interview might last some time."

"My dear Casanova, you are a man of honour. I am delighted to have made your acquaintance."

"You do me too much honour. I may say that Marcoline will hear nothing of all this."

When I got back to the inn, I gave Marcoline an exact account of the whole conversation, warning her that she would be supposed to know nothing about it.

"You must execute a masterly stroke, dearest," said I, "to persuade M. Querini that I did not lie in saying that you had not seen your

uncle. As soon as you see him, you must give a shout of surprise, exclaim, 'My dear uncle!' and rush to his arms. This will be a splendid and dramatic situation, which will do you great honour in the eyes of all the company."

"You may be sure that I shall play the part very well, though my heart be sad."

At the time appointed, we waited on the ambassadors and found that all the other guests had assembled. Marcoline, as blithe and smiling as before, first accosted M. Querini and then made a polite curtsy to all the company. A few minutes before dinner Matteo brought in his master's spectacles on a silver tray. Marcoline, who was sitting next to M. Querini, stopped short in something she was saying and, staring at the man, exclaimed in a questioning voice, "My uncle?"

"Yes, my dear niece."

Marcoline flung herself into his arms and there was a moving scene which excited the admiration of all.

"I knew you had left Venice, dear uncle, but I did not know you were in his excellency's service. I am so glad to see you again! You will tell my father and mother about me? You see I am happy. Where were you yesterday?"

"Here."

"And you didn't see me?"

"Oh, yes; but your other uncle over there..."

"Well," said I, laughing, "let us know each other, cousin, and be good friends. Marcoline, I congratulate you on having such an honest man for an uncle."

"This is really very fine," said M. Querini, and everybody exclaimed, "Very affecting, very affecting indeed!"

The newly found uncle departed and we sat down to dinner, but in spirits which differed from those of the day before. Marcoline bore traces of the mingled emotions of happiness and regret which move loyal hearts when they recall their native land. M. Querini looked at her admiringly and seemed to have all the confidence of success which a good action gives. M. Morosini sat a pleased spectator. The others were attentive and curious as to what would come next. They listened to what was said, and they hung on Marcoline's lips.

After the first course there was a greater unison in the company and M. Morosini told Marcoline that, if she would return to Venice, she would be sure of finding a husband worthy of her.

"I must be the judge of that," said she.

"Yes, but it is a good thing to have recourse to the advice of discreet persons who are interested in the happiness of both parties."

"Excuse me, but I do not think so. If ever I marry, my husband will have to please me first."

"Who taught you that maxim?" said Querini.

"My uncle, Casanova, who has, I verily believe, taught me everything that can be learnt in the two months I have been happy enough to live with him."

"I congratulate master and pupil, but you are both too young to have learnt all the range of science. Moral science cannot be learnt in two months."

"What His Excellency has just said," said I, turning to Marcoline, "is perfectly correct. In affairs of marriage both parties should rely to a great extent on the advice of friends, for marriages of mere inclination are often unhappy."

"That is a most philosophical remark, my dear Marcoline," said Querini, "but tell me the qualities which in your opinion are desirable in a husband."

"I should be puzzled to name them, but they would all become manifest in the man that pleased me."

"And supposing he were a worthless fellow?"

"He would certainly not please me and that's the reason why I have made up my mind never to marry a man whom I have not studied."

"Supposing you made a mistake?"

"Then I would weep in secret."

"How if you were poor?"

"She need never fear poverty, my lord," said I. "She has an income of fifty crowns a month for the remainder of her life."

"Oh, that's a different matter. If that is so, my dear, you are privileged. You will be able to live in Venice in perfect independence."

"I think that, to live honourably there, I need only the protection of a lord like Your Excellency."

"As to that, Marcoline, I give you my word I will do all in my power for you if you come to Venice. But let me ask you one question—how are you sure of your income of fifty crowns a month? You are laughing."

"I laugh because I am such a silly little thing. I don't have any heed for my own business. My friend there will tell you all about it."

"You have not been joking, have you?" said the worthy old man to me.

"Marcoline," said I, "has not only capital which will produce a larger sum than that which I have named, but she has also valuable possessions. Your Excellency will note her wisdom in saying that she would need your lordship's protection in Venice, for she will require someone to look after the investment of her capital. The whole amount is in my hands and, if she likes, Marcoline can have it all in less than two hours."

"Very good; then you must start for Venice the day after to-morrow. Matteo is quite ready to receive you."

"I have the greatest respect and love for my uncle, but it is not to his care that Your Excellency must commend me if I resolve to go."

"Then to whom?"

"To your own care, my lord. Your Excellency has called me 'dear daughter' two or three times; take me, then, to Venice like a good father and I will come willingly; otherwise I protest I will not leave the

man to whom I owe all I have. I will start for London with him the day after to-morrow."

At these words, which delighted me, silence fell on all. They waited for M. Querini to speak and the general opinion seemed to be that he had gone too far to be able to draw back. Nevertheless, the old man kept silence; perhaps in his character of devotee he was afraid of being led into temptation or of giving occasion for scandal, and the other guests were silent like him and ate to keep themselves in countenance. Matteo's hand trembled as he served us; Marcoline alone was calm and collected. Dessert was brought on and still no one dared say a word. All at once this wonderful girl said, in an inspired voice, as if speaking to herself, "We must adore the decrees of Divine Providence, but only after the issue, since mortals are not able to discern the future, whether it be good or evil."

"What does that reflection relate to, my dear daughter?" said M. Querini. "And why do you kiss my hand now?"

"I kiss your hand because you have called me your 'dear daughter' for the fourth time."

This judicious remark elicited a smile of approval from all and restored the general gaiety, but M. Querini asked Marcoline to explain her observation on Providence.

"It was an inspiration and the result of self-examination. I am in good health; I have learned something of life; I am only seventeen and in the course of two months I have become rich by honest means. I am surely happy because I am conscious of my happiness; and yet I owe all of that to the greatest error a maiden can commit. Therefore I humble myself before the decrees of Providence and adore its wisdom a thousand times over."

"You are right, but none the less you ought to repent of what you have done."

"That's where I am puzzled, for, before I can repent, I must think it over, and, when I do that, I find nothing to repent. I suppose I shall have to consult some great theologian on the point."

"That will not be necessary; you are intelligent and your heart is good and I will give you the necessary instruction on the way. When one repents, there is no need to think of the pleasure which our sins have given us."

In his character of apostle, the good M. Querini was becoming piously amorous of his fair proselyte. He left the table for a few moments and, when he returned, he told Marcoline that, if he had a young lady to take to Venice, he should be obliged to entrust her to the care of his housekeeper, Dame Veneranda, in whom he had every confidence.

"I have just been speaking to her and, if you would like to come, all is arranged. You shall sleep with her and dine with us till we get to Venice, and then I will deliver you into your mother's keeping in the presence of your uncle. What do you say?"

"I will come with pleasure."

"Come and see Dame Veneranda."

"Willingly."

"Come with us, Casanova."

Dame Veneranda looked a perfect canonesse and I did not think that Marcoline would fall in love with her, but she seemed sensible and trustworthy. M. Querini told her in our presence what he had just told Marcoline, and the duenna assured him that she would take the utmost care of the young lady. Marcoline kissed her and called her "mother," thus gaining the old lady's good graces. We rejoined the company, who expressed to Marcoline their intense pleasure at having her for a companion on their journey.

"I shall have to put my steward in another carriage," said M. Querini, "as the calash holds only two."

"That will not be necessary," I remarked, "for Marcoline has her carriage and Mistress Veneranda will find it a very comfortable one. It will hold her luggage as well."

"You wish to give me your carriage?" said Marcoline. "You are too good to me."

I could make no reply, my emotion was so great. I turned aside and wiped away my tears. Returning to the company, I found that Marcoline had vanished and M. Morosini, who was also much affected, told me she had gone to speak to Mistress Veneranda. Everybody was melancholy and, seeing that I was the cause, I began to talk about England, where I hoped to make my fortune with a project of mine, the success of which depended only on Lord Egremont. M. de Morosini said he would give me a letter for Lord Egremont and another for M. Zuccato, the Venetian ambassador.

"Are you not afraid," said M. Querini, "of getting into trouble with the State Inquisitors by recommending M. Casanova?"

Morosini replied coldly that, as the Inquisitors had not told him for what crime I was condemned, he did not feel himself bound to share their judgment. Old Querini, who was extremely particular, shook his head and said nothing.

Just then Marcoline came back to the room and everybody could see that she had been weeping. I confess that this mark of her affection was as pleasing to my vanity as to my love; but such is man and such, doubtless, is the reader who may be censuring my conduct.

This charming girl, who still after all these years dwells in my old heart, asked me to take her back to the inn, as she wanted to pack her trunks. We left directly, after having promised to come to dinner on the following day.

I wept bitterly when I got to my room. I told Clairmont to see that the carriage was in good order, and then, hastily undressing, I flung myself on the bed in my dressing-gown and wept as if some blessing were being taken from me against my will. Marcoline, who was much more sensible, did what she could to console me, but I liked to torment myself and her words did but increase my despair.

"Reflect," said she, "that it is not I who am leaving you, but you

who are sending me away; that I long to spend the rest of my days with you and that you have only to say one word to keep me."

I knew that she was right; but still a fatal fear which has always swayed me, the fear of being bound to anyone, and the hypocrisy of a libertine ever longing for change, both these feelings made me persist in my resolution and my sadness.

About six o'clock M.M. Morosini and Querini came into the courtyard and looked at the carriage, which was being inspected by the wheelwright. They spoke to Clairmont and then came to see us.

"Good heavens!" said M. Querini, seeing the numerous boxes which she was going to place on her carriage; and, when he heard that her carriage was the one he had just looked at, he seemed surprised; it was indeed a very good vehicle.

M. Morosini told Marcoline that, if she intended to sell it when she got to Venice, he would give her a thousand Venetian ducats, or three thousand francs, for it.

"You might give her double that amount," said I, "for it is worth three thousand ducats."

"We will arrange all that," said he, and Querini added, "It will be a considerable addition to the capital she proposes to invest."

After some agreeable conversation, I told M. Querini that I would give him a bill of exchange for five thousand ducats, which, with the three or four thousand ducats the sale of her jewellery would realize and the thousand for the carriage, would give her a capital of nine or ten thousand ducats, the interest of which would bring her in a handsome income.

Next morning I got M. Bono to give me a bill of exchange on M. Querini's order and at dinner-time Marcoline handed it over to her new protector, who wrote her a formal receipt. M. Morosini gave me the letters he had promised, and their departure was fixed for eleven o'clock the next day. The reader may imagine that our dinner party was none too gay. Marcoline was depressed, I was as gloomy as a splenetic Englishman and between us we made the feast more like a funeral than a gathering of friends.

I will not attempt to describe the night I passed with my charmer. She asked me again and again how I could be my own executioner, but I could not answer, for I did not know. But how often have I done things which caused me pain, but to which I was impelled by some occult force it was my whim not to resist!

In the morning, when I had put on my boots and spurs and told Clairmont not to be uneasy if I did not return that night, Marcoline and I drove to the ambassador's residence. We breakfasted together silently enough, for Marcoline had tears in her eyes and everyone, knowing my noble conduct towards her, respected her natural grief. After breakfast we set out, I sitting in the forepart of the carriage, facing Marcoline and Dame Veneranda, who would have made me laugh under any other circumstances, her astonishment at finding herself in a more gorgeous carriage than the ambassador's was so great

She expatiated on the elegance and comfort of the equipage and amused us by saying that her master was quite right in saying that the people would take her for the ambassadress. But, in spite of this piece of comedy, Marcoline and I were sad all the way. M. Querini, who did not like night travelling, had us stop at Pont-de-Beauvoisin at nine o'clock and after a bad supper everyone went to bed to be ready to start at daybreak. Marcoline was to sleep with Veneranda, so I accompanied her, and the worthy old woman went to bed without any ceremony, lying so close to the wall that there was room for two more on the bed; but, after Marcoline had got into bed, I sat down on a chair and, placing my head beside hers on the pillow, we mingled our tears and sighs all night long.

When Veneranda, who had slept soundly, awoke, she was much astonished to see me still in the same position. She was a great devotee, but woman's piety easily gives place to pity and she had moved to the furthest extremity of the bed with the intention of giving me another night of love. But my melancholy prevented my profiting by her kindness.

I had ordered a saddle-horse to be ready for me in the morning. We took a hasty cup of coffee and bade each other mutual farewells. I placed Marcoline in the carriage, gave her a last embrace and waited for the crack of the postillion's whip to gallop back to Lyons. I tore along like a madman, for I felt as if I should like to throw the horse to the ground and kill myself. But death never comes to him that desires it, save in the fables of the worthy La Fontaine. In six hours I had accomplished the eighteen leagues between Pont-de-Beauvoisin and Lyons, stopping only to change horses. I tore off my clothes and threw myself on the bed where thirty hours before I had enjoyed all the delights of love. I hoped that the bliss I had lost would return to me in my dreams. However, I slept profoundly and did not wake till eight o'clock. I had slept some nineteen hours.

I rang for Clairmont and told him to bring up my breakfast, which I devoured eagerly. When my stomach was restored in this manner, I fell asleep again and did not get up till the next morning, feeling quite well and as if I could endure life a little longer.

Three days after Marcoline's departure I bought a comfortable two-wheeled carriage with patent springs and sent my trunks to Paris by the diligence. I kept a portmanteau containing the merest necessities, for I meant to travel in a dressing-gown and nightcap, and keep to myself all the way to Paris. I intended this as a sort of homage to Marcoline, but I reckoned without my host. I was putting my jewellery together in a casket when Clairmont announced a tradesman and his daughter, a pretty girl whom I had remarked at dinner, for since the departure of my fair Venetian I had dined at the *table d'hôte* by way of distraction.

I shut up my jewels and asked them to come in and the father addressed me politely, saying, "Sir, I have come to ask you to do me

a favour which will cost you but little, while it will be of immense service to my daughter and myself."

"What can I do for you? I am leaving Lyons at daybreak tomorrow."

"I know it, for you said so at dinner, but we shall be ready at any hour. Be kind enough to give my daughter a seat in your carriage. I will, of course, pay for a third horse and will ride post."

"You cannot have seen the carriage."

"Excuse me, I have. It is, I know, meant for only one, but she could easily squeeze into it. I know I am troubling you but, if you were aware of the convenience it would be to me, I am sure you would not refuse. All the places in the diligence are taken until next week and, if I don't get to Paris in six days, I might as well stay away altogether. If I were a rich man, I would post, but that would cost four hundred francs and I cannot afford to spend so much. The only course open to me is to leave by the diligence to-morrow and to have myself and my daughter tied on the top. You see, sir, the idea makes her weep and I don't like it much better myself."

I looked attentively at the girl and found her too pretty for me to keep within bounds if I travelled alone with her. I was sad and the torment I had endured in parting from Marcoline had made me resolve to avoid all occasions which might have similar results. I thought this resolve necessary for my peace of mind.

"This girl," I said to myself, "may be so charming that I might fall in love with her if I yielded to the father's request, and I do not wish for any such result."

I turned to the father and said, "I sympathise with you sincerely, but I really don't see what I can do for you without causing myself the greatest inconvenience."

"Perhaps you think I shall not be able to ride so many posts in succession, but you needn't be afraid on that score."

"The horse might give in; you might have a fall and I know that I should feel obliged to stop, and I am in a hurry. If that reason does not strike you as a cogent one, I am sorry, for to me it appears unanswerable."

"Let us run the risk, sir, at all events."

"There is a still greater one which I do not think I should mention to you. In brief, sir, you ask what is impossible."

"In Heaven's name, sir," said the girl, with a voice and a look that would have pierced a heart of stone, "rescue me from that dreadful journey on the top of the diligence! The very idea makes me shudder, all the way I should be afraid of falling off; besides, there is something mean in travelling that way. Do but grant me this favour and I will sit at your feet, so as not to discomfort you."

"This is too much! You do not know me, mademoiselle. I am neither cruel nor impolite, especially where your sex is concerned, though my refusal must make you feel otherwise. If I give way, you may regret it afterward and I do not wish that to happen."

Then, turning to the father. I said:

"A post-chaise costs six louis. Here they are, take them. I will put off my departure for a few hours if necessary, to be responsible for the chaise, supposing you are not known here, and an extra horse will cost four louis, take them. As for the excess, you would have spent as much in buying two seats in the diligence."

"You are very kind, sir, but I cannot accept your gift. I am not worthy of it and I should be still less worthy if I accepted the money. Adèle, let us go. Forgive us, sir, if we have wasted half an hour of your time. Come, my poor child."

"Wait a moment, father."

Adèle begged him to wait, as her sobs almost choked her. I was furious but, having received one glance from her beautiful eyes, I could not withstand her sorrow any longer and said:

"Calm yourself, mademoiselle. It shall never be said that I remained unmoved while beauty wept. I yield to your request, for, if I did not, I should not be able to sleep all night. But I accede on one condition," I added, turning to her father, "and that is that you will ride on the back of my carriage."

"Certainly; but what is to become of your servant?"

"He will ride ahead on horseback. Everything is settled. Go to bed now and be ready to start at six o'clock."

"Certainly, but you will allow me to pay for the extra horse?"

"You shall pay nothing at all; it would be a shame if I received any money from you. You have told me you are poor and poverty is no dishonour. Well, I may tell you that I am rich and riches are no honour save when they are used in doing good. Therefore, as I said, I will pay for all."

"Very good, but I will pay for the extra horse for the carriage."

"Certainly not and let us have no bargaining, please; it is time to go to bed. I will set you down in Paris without the journey costing you a farthing and then, if you like, you may thank me; these are the only conditions on which I will take you. Look! Mlle. Adèle is laughing; that's reward enough for me."

"I am laughing for joy at having escaped that dreadful diligence top."

"I see, but I hope you will not weep in my carriage, for all sadness is an abomination to me."

I went to bed resolved to struggle against my fate no longer. I saw that I could not withstand the tempting charms of this new beauty and I determined that everything should be over in a couple of days. Adèle had beautiful blue eyes, a complexion wherein were mingled the lily and the rose, a small mouth, excellent teeth, a figure still slender but full of promise; here, surely, were motives enough for a fresh fall. I fell asleep thanking my good genius for thus providing me with amusement on the journey.

Just before we started, the father came and asked if it was all the same to me whether we went by Burgundy or the Bourbonnais.

"Certainly. Do you prefer any particular route?"

"If I went through Nevers, I might be able to collect a small account."

"Then we will go by the Bourbonnais."

Directly after Adèle, simply but neatly dressed, came down and wished me good day, telling me that her father was going to put a small trunk containing their belongings on the back of the carriage. Seeing me busy, she asked if she could help me in any way.

"No," I replied, "you had better take your seat."

She did so, but in a timid manner which annoyed me because it seemed to express that she was a dependent of mine. I told her so gently and made her take some coffee with me and her shyness soon wore off.

We were just stepping into the carriage when a man came and told me that the lamps were out of repair and would come off if something were not done to them. He offered to put them in good repair in an hour. I was in a terrible rage and called Clairmont and began to scold him, but he said that the lamps had been all right a short while before and that the man must have put them out of order so that he might have the task of repairing them.

He hit it exactly. I had heard of that trick before and I called out to the man, and, on his answering me rather impudently, I began to kick him, with my pistol in my hand. He ran off swearing and the noise brought up the landlord and five or six of his people. Everybody said I was in the right, but all the same I had to waste two hours, as it would not have been prudent to travel without lamps.

Another lampmaker was summoned; he looked at the damage and laughed at the rascally trick his fellow tradesman had played me.

"Can I imprison the rascal?" I said to the landlord. "I should like to have the satisfaction of doing so, were it to cost me two louis."

"Two louis! Your Honour shall be attended to in a moment."

I was in a dreadful rage and did not notice Adèle, who was quite afraid of me. A police official came up to take my information, examine witnesses and draw up the case.

"How much is your time worth, sir?" he asked me.

"Five louis."

With these words I slid two louis into his hands and he immediately wrote down a fine of twenty louis against the lampmaker and then went his way, saying, "Your man will be in prison in the next ten minutes."

I breathed again at the prospect of vengeance. I then begged pardon of Mlle. Adèle, who asked mine in her turn, not understanding in what manner I had offended her. This might have led to some affectionate passages, but her father came in, saying the rascal was in prison and that everyone said I was right.

"I am perfectly ready to swear he did the damage," said he.

"You saw him, did you?"

"No, but that's of no consequence, as everybody is sure he did."

This piece of simplicity restored my good temper completely and I began to ask Moreau, as he called himself, several questions. He told

me he was a widower, that Adèle was his only child, that he was going to set up in business at Louviers and so on.

In the course of an hour the comedy turned to pathos in the following manner. Two women, one of them with a baby at her breast and followed by four brats, all of whom might have been put under a bushel measure, came before me and, falling on their knees, gave me a premonition of what they were coming to ask of me. They were the wife, the mother and the children of the delinquent.

My heart was soon moved with pity for them, for my vengeance had been complete and I did not harbour resentment, but the wife almost put me in a fury again by saying that her husband was an innocent man and that they who had accused him were rascals.

The mother, seeing the storm ready to burst, attacked me more adroitly, admitting that her son might be guilty but that he must have been driven to it by misery, as he had no bread wherewith to feed his children. She added:

"My good sir, take pity on us, for he is our only support. Do a good deed and set him free, for he would stay in prison all his days unless we sold our beds to pay you."

"My worthy woman, I forgive him completely. Hand this document to the police magistrate and all will be well."

At the same time I gave her a louis and told her to go, not wishing to be troubled with her thanks. A few moments after the official came to get my signature for the man's release and I had to pay him legal costs. My lamps cost twelve francs to mend and at nine o'clock I started, having spent four or five louis for nothing.

Adèle was obliged to sit between my legs, but she was ill at ease. I told her to sit further back but, as she would have had to lean on me, I did not urge her; it would have been rather a dangerous situation to begin with. Moreau sat at the back of the carriage, Clairmont went on in front and we were thus *tête-à-tête*, or rather *tête-à-dos*, the whole way.

We got down to change horses and, as we were getting into the carriage again, Adèle had to lift her leg and showed me a pair of black breeches. I have always had a horror of women with breeches. but above all of black breeches.

"Sir," said I to her father, "your daughter has shown me her black breeches."

"It's uncommonly lucky for her that she didn't show you something else."

I liked the reply, but the cursed breeches had so offended me that I became quite sulky. It seemed to me that such clothes were a kind of rampart or outwork, very natural, no doubt, but I thought a young girl should know nothing of the danger, or, at all events, should pretend ignorance if she did not possess it. As I could not scold her nor overcome my bad temper, I contented myself with being polite, but I did not speak again till we got to St. Simphorien, unless it was to ask her to sit more comfortably.

When we got to St. Simphorien, I told Clairmont to go on ahead, and order us a good supper at Roanne and to sleep there. When we were about half way, Adèle told me that she must be a trouble to me, as I was not so gay as I had been. I assured her that it was not so and that I was keeping silence only that she might be able to rest.

"You are very kind," she answered, "but it is quite a mistake for you to think you would disturb me by talking. Allow me to tell you that you are concealing the real cause of your silence."

"Do you know the real cause?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"Well, what is it?"

"You have changed since you saw my breeches."

"You're right; that black attire has clothed my soul in gloom."

"I am very sorry, but you must allow that, in the first place, I was not to suppose that you were going to see my breeches and, in the second place, I could not be aware that the colour would be distasteful to you."

"True again, but, as I chanced to see the articles, you must forgive my disgust. This black has filled my soul with funereal images, just as white would have cheered me. Do you always wear those dreadful breeches?"

"I am wearing them for the first time to-day."

"Then you must allow that you have committed an unbecoming action."

"Unbecoming?"

"Yes, what would you have said if I had come down in petticoats this morning? You would have pronounced them unbecoming. You are laughing."

"Forgive me, but I never heard anything so amusing. However, your comparison will not stand; everyone would have seen your petticoats, whereas no one has any business to see my breeches."

I assented to her logic, delighted to find her capable of tearing my sophism to pieces, but I still preserved silence.

At Roanne we had a rather good supper and Moreau, who knew very well that, if it had not been for his daughter, there would have been no free journey and free supper for him, was delighted when I told him that she kept me good company. I told him about our discussion on breeches and he pronounced his daughter to be in the wrong, laughing pleasantly. After supper I told him that he and his daughter were to sleep in the room in which we were sitting, while I would pass the night in an adjoining smaller room.

Just as we were starting the next morning, Clairmont told me he would go on ahead to see that beds were ready, adding that, as we had lost one night, it would not do much harm if we were to lose another.

This speech showed me that my faithful Clairmont was beginning to feel the need of rest, and his health was dear to me. I told him to stop at St.-Pierre-le-Moutier and see to it that a good supper was

ready for us. When we were in the carriage again, Adèle thanked me.

"Then you don't like night travelling?" I said.

"I shouldn't mind it if I were not afraid of going to sleep and falling on you."

"Why, I would like that. A pretty girl like you is an agreeable burden."

She made no reply, but I saw that she understood, my declaration was made, but something more was necessary before I could rely on her docility. I relapsed into silence again till we got to Varennes and then I said, "If I thought you could eat a roast fowl with as good an appetite as mine, I would dine here."

"Try me. I will endeavour to match you."

We ate well and drank better and, by the time we started again, we were a little drunk. Adèle, who was accustomed to drink wine only two or three times in a year, laughed at not being able to stand upright but seemed afraid something would happen. I comforted her by saying that the fumes of champagne soon evaporated; but, though she strove with all her might to keep awake, Nature conquered and, letting her pretty head fall on my breast, she fell fast asleep and did not wake for two hours. I treated her with the greatest respect, though I could not resist ascertaining that the article of clothing which had displeased me so much had entirely disappeared.

While she slept, I enjoyed the pleasure of gazing on the swelling curves of her budding breast, but I restrained my ardour, as the disappearance of the black breeches assured me I should find her perfectly submissive whenever I chose to make the attempt. I wished, however, that she should give herself up to me of her own free will or at any rate come half way to meet me, and I knew that I had only to smoothe the path to make her do so.

When she awoke and found that she had been sleeping in my arms, her astonishment was extreme. She apologised and begged me to forgive her, while I thought the best way to put her at ease would be to give her an affectionate kiss; the result was satisfactory. Who does not know the effect of a kiss given at the proper time?

As her dress was in some disorder, she tried to readjust it, but we were rather cramped for space and by an awkward movement she uncovered her knee. I burst out laughing and she joined me and had the presence of mind to say, "I hope the black colour has given you no funereal thoughts this time."

"The hue of the rose, dear Adèle, can only inspire me with delicious fancies."

I saw that she lowered her eyes but in a manner that showed she was pleased.

With this talk—and, so to speak, casting oil on the flames—we reached Moulins and got down for a few moments. A crowd of women assailed us to purchase knives and edged tools of all sorts and I bought the father and daughter whatever they fancied. We went on

our way, leaving the women quarrelling and fighting because some had sold their wares and others had not.

In the evening we reached St Pierre, but during the four hours that had elapsed since we left Moulins we had progressed and Adèle had become quite familiar with me.

Thanks to Clairmont, who had arrived two hours before, an excellent supper awaited us. We supped in a large room, where two great white beds stood ready to receive us.

I told Moreau that he and his daughter should sleep in one bed and I in the other, but he replied that Adèle and I could each have a bed to ourselves, as he wanted to start for Nevers directly after supper, so as to be able to catch his debtor at daybreak and rejoin us when we got there the following day.

"If you had told me before, we would have gone on to Nevers and slept there."

"You are too kind. I mean to ride the three and a half stages. The riding will do me good and I like it. I leave my daughter in your care. She will not be so near you as in the carriage."

"Oh, we will be very discreet, you may be sure!"

After his departure I told Adèle to go to bed in her clothes if she was afraid of me.

"I shan't be offended," I added.

"It would be very wrong of me," she answered, "to give you such a proof of my want of confidence."

She rose, went out a moment and, when she came back, she locked the door and, as soon as she was ready to slip off her last article of clothing, she came and kissed me. I happened to be writing at the time and, as she had come up on tiptoe, I was startled, though in a very agreeable manner. She fled to her bed, saying saucily, "Fie! you were frightened."

"You are wrong, you pretty little fairy, but you surprised me. Come back, I want again to see you asleep in my arms."

"Come and see me sleep."

I flung down the pen and in a moment I held her in my arms, smiling, ardent, submissive to my desire and only entreating me to spare her. At five o'clock in the morning Clairmont knocked and I told him to get us some coffee. I was obliged to get up without suitably bidding fair Adèle good day.

When she was dressed, she viewed the scene of her defeat with a sigh. She was pensive for some time but, when we were in the carriage again, her gaiety returned and in our mutual transports we forgot to grieve over our approaching parting.

We found Moreau at Nevers; he was in a great state because he could not get his money before noon. He dared not ask me to wait for him, but I said we would have a good dinner and start when the money was paid.

While dinner was being prepared, we shut ourselves up in a room to avoid the crowd of women who pestered us to buy a thousand

trifles, and at two o'clock we started, Moreau having got his money. We got to Cosne at twilight and, though Clairmont was waiting for us at Briare, I decided on stopping where I was, and this night proved superior to the first. The next day we made a breakfast of the meal which had been prepared for our supper, and we slept at Fontainebleau, where I was happy with Adèle for the last time. In the morning I promised to come and see her at Louviers when I returned from England, but was not able to keep my word.

We took four hours to get from Fontainebleau to Paris, but how quickly the time passed! I stopped the carriage near the Pont St. Michel opposite a clockmaker's shop and, after looking at several watches, I gave one to Adèle and then dropped her and her father at the corner of the Rue aux Ours. I put up at the Hôtel de Montmorency, not wanting to stop with Madame d'Urfé but, after dressing, I went to dine with her.

CHAPTER 104

As usual, Madame d'Urfé received me with open arms, but I was surprised at hearing her tell Aranda to fetch the sealed letter she had given him in the morning. I opened it and found it was dated the same day and contained the following:

"My genius told me at daybreak that Galtinardus was starting from Fontainebleau and would come and dine with me to-day."

She chanced to be right, but I have had many similar experiences in the course of my life, experiences which would have turned any other man's head. I confess they have surprised me, but they have never made me lose my reasoning powers. Men make a guess which turns out to be correct and they immediately claim prophetic power, but they forget all about the many cases in which they have been mistaken. Six months ago I was silly enough to bet that a bitch would have a litter of five bitch pups on a certain day and I won. Everyone thought it a marvel except myself, for, if I had chanced to lose, I should have been the first to laugh.

I naturally expressed my admiration for Madame d'Urfé's genius and shared her joy in finding herself so well during her pregnancy. In expectation of my arrival, the worthy lunatic had given orders that she was not at home to her usual callers, and so we spent the rest of the day together, consulting how we could make Aranda go to London of his own free will; and, as I did not in the least know how it was to be done, the replies of the oracle were very obscure. Madame d'Urfé had such a strong dislike to bidding him go that I could not presume on her obedience to that extent and I had to rack my brains to find out some way of making the little man ask to be taken to London as a favour.

I went to the Comédie Italienne, where I found Madame du Romain, who seemed glad to see me back in Paris again.

"I want to consult the oracle on a matter of the greatest importance," said she, "and I hope you will come and see me to-morrow."

I, of course, promised to do so.

I did not care for the performance and should have left the theatre if I had not wanted to see the ballet, though I could not foresee the peculiar interest it would have for me. What was my surprise to see the Corticelli amongst the dancers. I thought I would like to speak to her, not for any amorous reasons but because I felt curious to hear her adventures. As I came out, I met the worthy Baletti, who told me he had left the stage and was living on an annuity. I asked him about the Corticelli and he gave me her address, telling me she was in a poor way.

I went to sup with my brother and his wife, who were delighted to see me and told me I had come just in time to use a little gentle persuasion on our brother the abbé, as they were determined to be rid of him.

"Where is he?"

"You will see him before long, for it is near supper-time and, as eating and drinking are the chief concerns of his life, he will not fail to put in an appearance."

"What has he done?"

"Everything that a good-for-nothing can do; but I hear him coming and I will tell you all about it in his presence."

The abbé was astonished to see me and began a polite salutation, although I did not favour him with so much as a look. Then he asked me what I had against him.

"All that an honest man can have against a monster. I read the letter you wrote Possano, in which I am styled a cheat, a spy, a coiner and a poisoner. What does the abbé think of that?"

He sat down to table without a word and my brother began as follows:

"When this fine gentleman first came here, my wife and I gave him a most cordial welcome. I allowed him a nice room and told him to look upon my house as his own. Possibly with the idea of interesting us in his favour, he began by saying that you were the greatest rascal in the world. To prove it, he told us how he had carried off a girl from Venice with the idea of marrying her and went to you in Genoa, as he was in great need. He confesses that you rescued him from his misery, but he says you traitorously took possession of the girl, associating her with two mistresses you had at that time. In fine, he says you lay with her before his eyes and drove him from Marseilles, that you might be able to enjoy her with greater freedom.

"He finished his story by saying that, as he could not go back to Venice, he needed our help till he could find some means of living on his talents, or through his profession as a priest. I asked him what his talents were, and he said he could teach Italian; but, as he speaks it vilely and doesn't know a word of French, we laughed at him. We were therefore reduced to seeing what we could do for him in his

character of priest, and the very next day my wife spoke to M. de Sauci, the ecclesiastical commissioner, begging him to give my brother an introduction to the Archbishop of Paris, who might give him something that might lead to his obtaining a good benefice. He would have to attend our parish church and I spoke to the rector of St. Sauveur, who promised to let him say mass, for which he would receive the usual sum of twelve sols. This was a very good beginning and might have led to something worth having but, when we told the worthy abbé of our success, he got into a rage, saying that he was not the man to say mass for twelve sols nor toady to the archbishop in the hope of being taken into his service. No, he was not going to be in anyone's service. We concealed our indignation but, for the three weeks he has been here, he has turned everything upside down. My wife's maid left us yesterday, to our great annoyance, because of him; and the cook says she will go if he remains, as he is always bothering her in the kitchen. We are therefore resolved that he shall go, for his society is intolerable to us. I am delighted to have you here, as I think between us we ought to be able to drive him away and the sooner, the better."

"Nothing easier," said I. "If he wishes to stay in Paris, let him do so. You can send his rags to some furnished apartments and serve him with a police order not to set foot in your house again. On the other hand, if he wants to go away, let him say where and I will pay him his journey money this evening."

"Nothing could be more generous. What do you say, abbé?"

"I say that this is the way in which he drove me from Marseilles. What intolerable violence!"

"Give God thanks, monster, that, instead of thrashing you within an inch of your life, as you deserve, I am going to give you some money! Don't forget that you tried to have me hanged in Lyons."

"Where is Marcoline?"

"What is that to you? Make haste and choose between Rome and Paris, and remember that, if you choose Paris, you will have nothing to live on."

"Then I will go to Rome."

"Good! The journey costs only twenty louis, but I will give you twenty-five."

"Hand them over."

"Patience. Give me pens, ink and paper."

"What are you going to write?"

"Bills of exchange on Lyons, Turin, Genoa, Florence and Rome. Your seat will be paid as far as Lyons and there you will be able to get five louis and the same sum in the other towns but, as long as you stay in Paris, not one single farthing will I give you. I am staying at the Hôtel de Montmorency; that's all you need know about me."

I then bade farewell to my brother and his wife, telling them we should meet again. Checco, as we called my brother, told me he would send on the abbé's trunk the day following, and I bade him do so by all means.

The next day trunk and abbé came together. I did not even look at the latter but, after I had seen that a room had been assigned him, I called out to the landlord that I would be answerable for the abbé's board and lodging for three days and not a moment more. The abbé tried to speak to me, but I sternly declined to have anything to say to him, strictly forbidding Clairmont to admit him to my apartments.

When I went to Madame du Romain's, the porter said:

"Sir, everybody is still asleep, but who are you? I have instructions"

"I am the Chevalier de Seingalt."

"Kindly come into my lodge and amuse yourself with my niece. I will soon be with you."

I went in and found a neatly dressed and charming girl.

"Mademoiselle," said I, "your uncle told me to come in and amuse myself with you."

"He is a rascal, for he consulted neither of us."

"Yes, but he knew well enough that there could be no doubt about my opinion after I had seen you."

"You are very flattering, sir, but I know the value of compliments."

"Yes, I suppose that you often get them, and you well deserve them all."

The conversation, as well as the pretty eyes of the niece, began to interest me, but fortunately the uncle put an end to it by begging me to follow him. He took me to the chambermaid's room and I found her putting on a petticoat and grumbling the while.

"What is the matter, my pretty maid? You don't seem to be in good humour."

"You would have done better to come at noon; it is not nine o'clock yet and Madame did not come home till three o'clock this morning. I am just going to wake her and I am sorry for her."

I was taken into the room directly and, though her eyes were half closed, Madame du Romain thanked me for awaking her, while I apologised for having disturbed her sleep.

"Raton," said she, "give us the writing materials and go away. Don't come till I call you and, if anyone asks for me, I am sleeping."

"Very well, madame, and I will go to sleep also."

"My dear M. Casanova, how is it that the oracle has deceived us? M. du Romain is still alive and he was to have died six months ago. It is true that he is not well, but we will go into all that again. The really important question is this: You know music is my favourite pursuit and that my voice is famous for its strength and compass; well, I have completely lost it. I have not sung a note for three months. The doctors have stuffed me with remedies which have had no effect. It makes me very unhappy, for singing was the one thing that made me cling to life. I entreat you to ask the oracle how I can recover my voice. How delighted I should be if to-morrow I could sing! I have a great many people coming here and I should enjoy the general astonishment. If the oracle wills it, I am sure it might be so, for I have

a very strong chest. That is my question; it is a long one, but so much the better, the answer will be long, too, and I like long answers."

I was of the same opinion, for, when the question was a long one, I had time to think over the answer as I built up the pyramid. Madame du Romain's complaint was evidently something trifling, but I was no physician and knew nothing about medicine. Besides, for the honour of the cabala, the oracle must have nothing to do with mere empiric remedies. I soon made up my mind that a little care in her way of living would soon restore the throat to its normal condition, and any doctor with brains in his head could have told her as much. In the position I was in, I had to make use of the language of a charlatan, so I resolved on prescribing a ceremonial worship to the sun at an hour which would insure some regularity in her mode of life.

The oracle declared that she would recover her voice in twenty-one days, reckoning from the new moon, if she worshipped the rising sun every morning in a room which had at least one window looking to the east.

A second reply bade her sleep seven hours in succession before she sacrificed to the sun, each hour symbolising one of the seven planets, and, before she went to bed, she was to take a bath in honour of the moon, placing her legs in lukewarm water up to the knees. I then pointed out the psalms she was to recite to the moon and those which she was to say in the face of the rising sun, at a closed window.

This last direction filled her with admiration. "For," said she, "the oracle knew I should catch cold if the window were open. I will do everything the oracle bids me," added the credulous lady, "but I hope you will get me everything necessary for the ceremonies."

"I will not only take care that you have all the requisites but, as a proof of my zeal for you, I will come and do the suffumigations myself, that you may learn how it is done."

She seemed deeply moved by this offer, but I expected as much. I knew how the most trifling services are assessed at the highest rates, and herein lies the great secret of success in the world, above all where ladies of fashion are concerned.

As we had to begin the next day, being the new moon, I called on her at nine o'clock. As she had to sleep for seven successive hours before performing the ceremonies to the rising sun, she would have to go to bed before ten, and the observance of all these trifles was of importance, as anyone can understand.

I was sure that, if anything could restore this lady's voice, a careful regimen would do it. I proved to be right and in London I received a grateful letter announcing the success of my method.

Madame du Romain, whose daughter married the Prince de Polignac, was a lover of pleasure and haunted grand supper parties. She could not expect always to enjoy perfect health and she had lost her voice by the way in which she had abused it. When she had recovered her voice (as she thought, by the influence of the genii) she laughed at anyone who told her there was no such thing as magic.

I found at Madame d'Urfé's, a letter from Thérèse in which she informed me that she would come to Paris and take her son back by force if I did not bring him to London, adding that she wanted a positive reply. I did not ask for anything better, but I thought Thérèse very insolent.

I told Aranda that his mother would be waiting for us at Abbeville in a week's time and that she wanted to see him.

"We will both give her the pleasure of seeing us."

"Certainly," said he, "but, as you are going on to London, how shall I come back?"

"By yourself," said Madame d'Urfé, "dressed as a postillion."

"What! Shall I ride post? How delightful!"

"You must cover only eight or ten posts a day, for you have no need to risk your life by riding all night."

"Yes, yes; but I am to dress like a postillion, am I not?"

"Yes; I will have a handsome jacket and a pair of leather breeches made for you and you shall have a flag with the arms of France on it."

"They will take me for a courier going to London."

With the idea that to throw difficulties in the way would confirm him in his desire to go, I said roughly that I could not hear of it, as the horse might fall and break his neck. I had to be begged and entreated for three days before I would give in, and I did so on the condition that he should ride only on his way back.

As he was certain of returning to Paris, he took linen sufficient for only a very short distance but, as I knew that, once at Abbeville, he could not get away from me, I sent his trunk on to Calais, where we found it on our arrival. However, the worthy Madame d'Urfé got him a magnificent postillion's suit, not forgetting the top-boots.

This business, which offered a good many difficulties, was happily arranged by pure chance; and I am glad to confess that often in my life chance has turned the scale in my favour.

I called on a banker and got him to give me heavy credits on several of the most important houses in London, where I wished to make numerous acquaintances.

While I was crossing the Place des Victoires, I passed by the house where the Corticelli lived, and my curiosity made me enter. She was astonished to see me and after a long silence she burst into tears and said, "I should never have been unhappy if I had never known you."

"Yes, you would, only in some other way; your misfortunes are the result of your bad conduct. But tell me, what are your misfortunes?"

"As I could not stay in Turin after you had dishonoured me . . ."

"You came here to dishonour yourself, I suppose? Drop that tone or I will leave you."

She began her wretched tale, which struck me with consternation, for I could not help feeling that I was the first and last cause of this long list of woes. Hence I felt it was my duty to succour her, however ill she had treated me in the past.

"Then," said I, "you are at present the victim of a fearful disease,

heavily in debt and likely to be turned out of doors and imprisoned by your creditors. What do you propose to do?"

"Do? Why, throw myself in the Seine, to be sure; that's all that is left for me to do. I have not a farthing left."

"And what would you do if you had some money?"

"I would put myself in the doctor's hands, in the first place, and then, if any money was left, I would go to Bologna and try to get a living somehow. Perhaps I should have learnt a little wisdom by experience."

"Poor girl, I pity you and, in spite of your bad treatment of me, which has brought you to this pass, I will not abandon you. Here are four louis for your present wants and to-morrow I will tell you where you are to go for your cure. When you have got well again, I will give you enough money for the journey. Dry your tears, repent, amend your ways and may God have mercy on you!"

The poor girl threw herself down before me and covered one of my hands with kisses, begging me to forgive her for the ill she had done me. I comforted her and went my way, feeling very sad. I took a coach and drove to the Rue de Seine, where I called on an old surgeon I knew and told him the story and what I wanted him to do. He told me he could cure her in six weeks without anybody hearing about it, but that he must be paid in advance.

"Certainly; but the girl is poor and I am doing it out of charity."

The worthy man took a piece of paper and gave me a note addressed to a house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, which ran as follows:

"You will take in the person who brings you this note and three hundred francs, and in six weeks you will send her back cured, if it please God. The person has reasons for not wishing to be known."

I was delighted to have managed the matter so speedily and at such a cheap rate and I went to bed in a calmer state of mind, deferring my interview with my brother till the next day.

He came at eight o'clock and, constant to his folly, told me he had a plan to which he was sure I could have no objection.

"I don't want to hear anything about it; make your choice, Paris or Rome."

"Give me the travel money; I will remain in Paris but I will give a written engagement not to trouble you or our brother again. That should be sufficient."

"It is not for you to judge of that. Begone! I have neither the time nor the wish to listen to you. Remember, Paris without a farthing, or Rome with twenty-five louis."

Thereupon I called Clairmont and told him to put the abbé out.

I was in a hurry to have done with the Corticelli affair and went to the house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, where I found a kindly and intelligent-looking man and woman and all the arrangements of the house satisfactory and appropriate to the performance of secret cures. I saw the room and the bath destined for the new boarder; everything was clean and neat and I gave them a hundred crowns, for which they

handed me a receipt I told them that the lady would come either in the course of that day or on the day following.

I went to dine with Madame d'Urfé and the young Count d'Aranda. After dinner the worthy marchioness talked to me a long time of her pregnancy, dwelling on her symptoms and on the happiness that would be hers when the babe stirred within her. I had to put a strong restraint upon myself to avoid bursting out laughing. When I had finished with her, I went to the Corticelli, who called me her saviour and her guardian angel I gave her two louis to get some linen out of pawn and promised to come to see her before I left Paris, to give her a hundred crowns, which would take her back to Bologna. Then I waited on Madame du Romain, who had said farewell to society for three weeks

This lady had an excellent heart and was pretty as well, but she had so curious a society manner that she often made me laugh most heartily. She talked of the sun and moon as if they were two exalted personages to whom she was about to be presented. She was once discussing with me the state of the elect in Heaven and said that their greatest happiness was, no doubt, to love God *to distraction*, for she had no idea of calm and peaceful bliss.

I gave her the incense for the fumigation and told her what psalms to recite and then we had a delicious supper. She told her chambermaid to escort me at ten o'clock to a room on the second floor which she had furnished for me with the utmost luxury, adding, "Take care that the Chevalier de Seingalt is able to enter my room at five o'clock to-morrow morning."

At nine o'clock I placed her legs in a bath of lukewarm water and taught her how to suffumigate. Her legs were moulded by the hand of the Graces and I wiped them amorously up to the knee, laughing to myself at her expression of gratitude, and I then laid her tenderly in bed, contenting myself with a solemn kiss on her pretty forehead. When it was over, I went up to my room, where I was waited on by the pretty maid, who performed her duties with that playful grace peculiar to the French soubrette and told me that, as I had become her mistress's chambermaid, it was only right that she should be my valet. Her mirth was infectious and I tried to make her sit down on my lap; but she fled like a deer, telling me I should husband my strength if I wanted to cut a good figure at five o'clock the next day. She was wrong, but appearances were certainly against us and it is well known that servants do not give their masters and mistresses the benefit of the doubt.

At five o'clock in the morning I found Madame du Romain nearly dressed when I went into her room, and we immediately went into another, from which the rising sun might have been seen if the Hôtel de Bouillon had not been in the way, but that, of course, was a matter of no consequence. Madame du Romain performed the ceremonies with all the dignity of an ancient priestess of Baal. She then sat down to her piano, telling me that to find some occupation for the long morning of nine hours would prove the hardest of all the rules, for she

did not dine till two, which was then the fashionable hour. We had a meat breakfast without coffee, which I had proscribed, and I left her, promising to call again before I left Paris.

When I got back to my inn, I found my brother there, looking very uneasy at my absence at such an early hour. When I saw him I cried, "Rome or Paris, which is it to be?"

"Rome," he replied, cringingly.

"Wait in the ante-chamber. I will do your business for you."

When I had finished, I called him in and was surprised to see my other brother and his wife come in with him, saying they had come to ask me to invite them to dinner.

"Welcome!" said I. "You are come just in time to witness the execution of the abbé, who has resolved at last to follow my directions and go to Rome."

I sent Clairmont to the diligence office and told him to book a seat for Lyons and then I wrote out five bills of exchange of five louis each on Lyons, Turin, Genoa, Florence and Rome.

"Who is to assure me that these bills will be honoured?"

"I assure you, blockhead. If you don't like them, you can leave them."

Clairmont brought the ticket for the diligence and I gave it to the abbé, telling him roughly to be gone.

"But I may dine with you, surely?" said he.

"No, I have done with you. Go and dine with Possano, as you are his accomplice in the horrible attempt he made to murder me. Clairmont, show this man out and never let him set foot here again."

No doubt more than one of my readers will pronounce my treatment of the abbé to have been barbarous; but, putting aside the fact that I owe no man an account of my thoughts, deeds and words, Nature had implanted in me a strong dislike for this brother of mine and his conduct as a man and a priest and, above all, his connivance with Possano had made him so hateful to me that I should have watched him being hanged with the utmost indifference, not to say with the greatest pleasure. Let everyone have his own principles and his own passions; my favourite passion has always been vengeance.

"What did you do with the girl he eloped with?" said my sister-in-law.

"I sent her back to Venice with the ambassadors, the better by thirty thousand francs, some fine jewels and a perfect outfit of clothes. She travelled in a carriage I gave her which was worth more than two hundred louis."

"That's all very fine, but you must make some allowance for the abbé's grief and rage at seeing you sleep with her."

"Fools, my dear sister, are made to suffer such grief and many other griefs besides. Did he tell you she would not let him have anything to do with her and that she used to box his ears?"

"On the contrary, he was always talking of her love for him."

"He made himself out a fine fellow, I have no doubt, but the truth is, it was a very ugly business."

After several hours of pleasant conversation my brother left and I took my sister-in-law to the opera. As soon as we were alone, this poor sister of mine began to make the most bitter complaints of my brother.

"I am no more his wife, now," said she, "than I was the night before our marriage."

"What! Still a maid?"

"As much a maid as at the moment I was born. They tell me I could easily obtain a dissolution of the marriage but, besides the scandal that would arise, I unhappily love him and should not like to do anything that would give him pain."

"You are a wonderful woman, but why do you not provide him with an understudy?"

"I know I might do so without having to endure much remorse, but I prefer to bear it."

"You are very praiseworthy. But in other ways are you happy?"

"He is overwhelmed with debt and, if I chose to call on him to give me back my dowry, he would not have a shirt to his back. Why did he marry me? He must have known his impotence. It was a dreadful thing to do."

"Yes, but you must forgive him for it."

She had cause for complaint, for marriage without enjoyment is a thorn without roses. She was passionate, but her principles were stronger than her passions, else she would have sought what she wanted elsewhere. My impotent brother excused himself by saying that he loved her so well he thought cohabitation with her would restore the missing faculty; he deceived himself and her at the same time. In time she died and he married another woman with the same idea, but this time passion was stronger than virtue and his new wife drove him away from Paris. I shall say more of him in twenty years' time.

At six o'clock the next morning the abbé went off in the diligence and I did not see him for six years. I spent the day with Madame d'Urfé and I agreed, outwardly, that young d'Aranda should return to Paris as a postillion. I fixed our departure for the day after the next.

The following day, after dining with Madame d'Urfé, who continued to revel in the joys of her regeneration, I paid a visit to the Corticelli in her asylum. I found her sad and suffering but content and well pleased with the gentleness of the surgeon and his wife, who told me they would effect a radical cure. I gave her twelve louis, promising to send her twelve more as soon as I had received a letter from her written from Bologna. She promised she would write to me, but the poor unfortunate was never able to keep her word, for she succumbed to the treatment, as the old surgeon wrote to me when I was in London. He asked what he should do with the twelve louis which she had left to one Madame Laura, who was perhaps known to me. I sent him her address and the honest surgeon hastened to fulfil the last wishes of the deceased.

All the persons who helped me in my magical operations with Madame d'Urfé betrayed me, Marcoline excepted, and all save the fair Venetian died miserably. Later on the reader will hear more of Possano and Costa.

The day before I left for London I supped with Madame du Romain, who told me her voice was already beginning to return. She added a sage reflection which pleased me highly.

"I should think," she observed, "that the careful living prescribed by the cabala must have a good effect on my health."

"Most certainly," said I, "and, if you continue to observe the rules, you will keep both your health and your voice."

I knew that it is often necessary to deceive before one can instruct; the shadows must come before the dawn.

I took leave of my worthy Madame d'Urfé with an emotion which I had never experienced before; it must have been a warning that I should never see her again. I assured her I would faithfully observe all my promises, and she replied that her happiness was complete and that she knew she owed it all to me. Finally I took d'Aranda and his top-boots, which he was continually admiring, to my inn, whence we started in the evening, as he had begged me to travel by night. He was ashamed to be seen in a carriage dressed as a courier.

When we reached Abbeville, he asked me where his mother was.

"We will see about it after dinner."

"But you can find out in a moment whether she is here or not?"

"Yes, but there is no hurry."

"And what will you do if she is not here?"

"We will go on till we meet her on the way. In the meanwhile let us go and see the famous manufactory of M. Varobes before dinner."

"Go by yourself. I am tired and will sleep till you come back."

"Very good."

I spent two hours in going over the magnificent establishment, the owner himself showing it me, and then I went back to dinner and called for my young gentleman.

"He started for Paris riding post," replied the innkeeper, who was also the postmaster, "five minutes after you left. He said he was going after some dispatches you had left at Paris."

"If you don't get him back, I will ruin you with lawsuits; you had no business to let him have a horse without my orders."

"I will capture the little rascal, sir, before he has got to Amiens."

He called a smart-looking postillion, who laughed when he heard what was wanted.

"I would catch him up," said he, "even if he had four hours' start. You shall have him here at six o'clock."

"I will give you two louis."

"I would catch him for that, though he were a very lark."

He was in the saddle in five minutes and by the rate at which he started I did not doubt his success. Nevertheless I could not enjoy my dinner. I felt so ashamed to have been taken in by a lad without any

knowledge of the world. I lay down on a bed and slept till the postillion aroused me by coming in with the runaway, who looked half dead. I said nothing to him but gave orders that he should be locked up in a good room, with a good bed to sleep on and a good supper, and I told the landlord that I should hold him answerable for the lad as long as I was in his inn. The postillion had caught him up at the fifth post, just before Amiens, and, as he was already quite tired out, the little man surrendered like a lamb.

At daybreak I summoned him before me and asked him if he would come with me to London of his own free will or bound hand and foot.

"I will come with you, I give you my word of honour, but you must let me ride on before you. Otherwise, with this dress of mine, I should be ashamed to go. I don't want it to be thought that you had to give chase to me, as if I had robbed you."

"I accept your word of honour, but be careful to keep it. Embrace me and order another saddle-horse."

He mounted his horse in high spirits and rode in front of the carriage with Clairmont. He was quite astonished to find his trunk at Calais, which he reached two hours before me.

CHAPTER 105

WHEN I got to Calais, I consigned my post-chaise to the care of the landlord of the inn and hired a packet. There was only one available for a private party, there being another for public use at six francs apiece. I paid six guineas in advance, taking care to get a proper receipt, for I knew that at Calais a man finds himself in an awkward position if he is unable to support his claim by documents.

Before the tide was out, Clairmont got all my belongings on board and I ordered my supper. The landlord told me that louis were not current in England and offered to give me guineas in exchange for mine; but I was surprised when I found he gave me the same number of guineas as I had given him of louis. I wanted him to take the difference—four per cent—but he refused, saying that he did not allow anything when the English gave him guineas for louis. I do not know whether he found his system a profitable one on the whole, but it was certainly so for me.

The young Count d'Aranda, to whom I had restored his humble name of Trenti, was quite resigned, but proud of having given me a specimen of his *savoir faire* by riding post. We were just going to sit down at table, well pleased with one another, when I heard a loud conversation in English going on near my door and mine host came in to tell me what it was all about.

"It's the courier of the Duke of Bedford, the English ambassador," said he. "He announces the approach of his master and is disputing with the captain of the packet. He says he hired the boat by letter and that the captain had no right to let it to you. The master main-

tains that he received no such letter, and no one can prove that he is telling a lie."

I congratulated myself on having taken the packet and paid the earnest-money, and went to bed. At daybreak the landlord said that the ambassador had arrived at midnight and that his man wanted to see me.

He came in and told me that the nobleman, his master, was in a great hurry to get to London and that I would oblige him very much by yielding the boat to him.

I did not answer a word but wrote a note which ran as follows:

"My lord the duke may dispose of the whole of the packet, with the exception of the space necessary for my own accommodation, that of two other persons and my luggage. I am delighted to have the opportunity of obliging the English ambassador."

The valet took the note and returned to thank me on behalf of his master, who stipulated, however, that he should be allowed to pay for the packet.

"Tell him it is out of the question, as the boat is paid for already."

"He will give you the six guineas."

"Tell your master that I cannot allow him to pay. I do not buy to sell again."

The duke called on me in the course of half an hour and said that we were both of us in the right.

"However," he added, "there is a middle course; let us adopt it and I shall be just as much indebted to you."

"What is that, my lord?"

"We will each pay half."

"My desire to oblige you, my lord, will not allow me to refuse, but it is I who will be indebted to you for the honour your lordship does me. We will start as soon as you like, and I can make my arrangements accordingly."

He shook my hand and left the room and, when he had gone, I found three guineas on the table. He had placed them there without my noticing them. An hour afterwards I returned his call and then told the master to take the duke and his carriages on board.

We took two hours and a half in crossing the Channel; the wind was strong but we made a good passage.

The stranger who sets foot on English soil has need of a good deal of patience. The custom house officials made a minute, vexatious and even impertinent perquisition; but, as the duke and ambassador had to submit, I thought it best to follow his example; besides, resistance would have been useless. The Englishman, who prides himself on his strict adherence to the law of the land, is curt and rude in his manner and the English officials cannot be compared to the French, who know how to combine politeness with the exercise of their rights.

England is different in every respect from the rest of Europe; even the country has a different aspect and the water of the Thames has a taste peculiar to itself. Everything has its own characteristics and

the fish, cattle, horses, men and women are of a type not found in any other land. Their manner of living is wholly different from that of other countries, especially their cookery. The most striking feature in their character is their national pride; they exalt themselves above all other nations.

My attention was attracted by the universal cleanliness, the beauty of the country, the goodness of the roads, the reasonable charges for posting, the speed of the horses, although they never go beyond a trot, and, lastly, the construction of the towns on the Dover Road. Canterbury and Rochester, for instance, though large and populous, are like long passages; they are all length and no breadth.

We got to London in the evening and stopped at the house of Madame Cornelis, as Thérèse called herself. She was originally married to an actor named Imer, then to the dancer Pompeati, who committed suicide in Venice by ripping up his stomach with a razor.

In Holland she had been known as Madame Trenti, but in London she had taken the name of her lover, Cornelius Rigerboos, whom she contrived to ruin.

She lived in Soho Square, almost facing the house of the Venetian ambassador. When I arrived, I followed the instructions I had received in her last letter. I left her son in the carriage and sent up my name, expecting she would fly to meet me; but the porter told me to wait and in a few minutes a servant in grand livery brought me a note in which Madame Cornelis asked me to alight at the house to which her servant would conduct me. I thought this rather strange behaviour, but still she might have her reasons for acting in this manner, so I did not let my indignation appear. When we got to the house, a fat woman named Rancour and two servants welcomed us, or rather welcomed my young friend; for the lady embraced him, told him how glad she was to see him and did not appear to be aware of my existence.

Our trunks were taken in and Madame Rancour, having ascertained which belonged to Cornelis, had it placed in a fine suite of three rooms and said, pointing out to him the apartment and the two servants, "This apartment and the two servants are for you and I, too, am your most humble servant."

Clairmont told me he had put my things in a room which communicated with Cornelis's. I went to inspect it and saw directly that I was being treated as if I were a person of no consequence. The storm of anger was gathering but, wonderful to relate, I subdued myself and did not say a word.

"Where is your room?" I said to Clairmont.

"Near the roof and I am to share it with one of those two louts you saw."

The worthy Clairmont, who knew my disposition, was surprised at the calm with which I said, "Take your trunk there."

"Shall I open yours?"

"No. We will see what can be done to-morrow."

I still kept on my mask and returned to the room of the young gentleman who seemed to be considered as my master. I found him listening with a foolish stare to Madame Rancour, who was telling him of the splendid position his mother occupied, her vast enterprises, her immense credit, the splendid house she had built, her thirty-three servants, her two secretaries, her six horses, her country house, etc., etc.

"How is my sister Sophie?" asked the young gentleman.

"Her name is Sophie, is it? She is known only as Miss Cornelis. She is a beauty, a perfect prodigy, she plays at sight on several instruments, dances like Terpsichore, speaks English, French and Italian equally well—in a word, she is really wonderful. She has a governess and a maid. Unfortunately, she is rather short for her age; she is eight."

She was ten but, as Madame Rancour was not speaking to me, I refrained from interrupting her.

Milord Cornelis, who felt very tired, asked at what hour they were to sup.

"At ten o'clock and not before," said the duenna, "for Madame Cornelis is always engaged till then. She is always with her lawyer, on account of an important lawsuit she has against Sir Frederick Fermer."

I could see that I should learn nothing worth learning by listening to the woman's gossip, so I took my hat and cane and went for a walk in the immense city, taking care not to lose my way.

It was seven o'clock when I went out and a quarter of an hour after, seeing a number of people in a coffee-house, I entered it. It was the most notorious place in London, the resort of all the rascally Italians in town. I had heard of it in Lyons and had made a firm resolve never to set my foot in it, but almighty chance made me go there unknown to myself. However, it was my only visit.

I sat down by myself and called for a glass of lemonade and before long a man came and sat by me to profit by the light. He had a printed paper in his hand and I could see that the words were Italian. He had a pencil with which he scratched out some words and letters, writing the corrections in the margin. Idle curiosity made me follow him in his work and I noticed him correcting the word *ancora*, putting in an *h* in the margin. I was irritated by this barbarous spelling and told him for four centuries *ancora* had been spelt without an *h*.

"Quite so," said he, "but I am quoting from Boccaccio and one should be exact in quotations."

"I apologise, sir; I see you are a man of letters."

"Well, in a small way. My name is Martinelli."

"Then you are in a great way indeed. I know you by repute and, if I am not mistaken, you are a relative of Calsabigi, who has spoken of you to me. I have read some of your satires."

"May I ask to whom I have the honour of speaking?"

"My name is Seingalt. Have you finished your edition of the *Decameron*?"

"I am still at work on it and trying to increase the number of my subscribers."

"If you will be so kind I should be glad to be of the number."

"You do me honour."

He gave me a ticket and, seeing that it was only a guinea, I took four and, telling him I hoped to see him again at the same coffee-house, the name of which I asked him, he told it me, evidently astonished at my ignorance; but his surprise vanished when I informed him that I had been in London only an hour and that it was my first visit to the great city.

"You will experience some trouble in finding your way back," said he. "Allow me to accompany you."

When we were outside, he warned me that chance had led me to the Orange Coffee-House, the most disreputable house in London.

"But you go there!"

"Yes, but I can say with Juvenal: *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*. The rogues can't hurt me. I know them and they know me; we never trouble each other."

"You have been a long time in London, I suppose."

"Five years."

"I presume you know a good many people."

"Yes, but I seldom wait on anyone but Lord Spencer. I am occupied with literary work and live all by myself. I don't make much, but enough to live on. I live in furnished apartments and have twelve shirts and the clothes you see on my back and that is enough for my happiness. *Nec ultra deos lacesso*."

I was pleased with this honest man, who spoke Italian with the most exquisite correctness.

On the way back I asked him what I had better do to get a comfortable lodging. When he heard the style in which I wished to live and the time I proposed to spend in London, he advised me to take a house completely furnished.

"You will be given an inventory of the goods," said he, "and, as soon as you get a surety, your house will be your castle."

"I like the idea," I answered, "but how shall I find such a house?"

"That is easily done."

He went into a shop, begged the mistress to lend him the *Advertiser*, noted down several advertisements and said, "That's all we have to do."

The nearest house was in Pall Mall and we went to see it. An old woman opened the door to us and showed us the ground floor and the three floors above. Each floor contained two rooms and a closet. Everything shone with cleanliness—linen, furniture, carpets, mirrors, china and even the bells and the bolts on the doors. The necessary linen was kept in a large press and in another were the silver plate and several sets of china. The arrangements in the kitchen were excellent and, in a word, nothing was lacking in the way of comfort. The rent was twenty guineas a week and, not stopping to bargain, which is never of any use in London, I told Martinelli I would take it on the spot.

Martinelli translated what I said to the old woman, who told me that, if I liked to keep her on as housekeeper, I need not have a surety and that it would only be necessary for me to pay for each week in advance. I answered that I would do so but that she must get me a servant who could speak French or Italian as well as English. She promised to get one in a day's time and I paid her four weeks' rent on the spot, for which she gave me a receipt under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt. This was the name by which I was known during the whole of my stay in London.

Thus in less than two hours I was comfortably settled in a town which is sometimes described as a chaos, especially for a stranger. But in London everything is easy to him who has money and is not afraid of spending it. I was delighted to be able to escape so soon from a house where I was welcomed so ill, though I had a right to the best reception, but I was still more pleased at the chance which had made me acquainted with Martinelli, whom I had known by repute for six years.

When I got back, Madame Cornelis had not yet arrived, though ten o'clock had struck. Young Cornelis was asleep on the sofa. I was enraged at the way the woman treated me, but I resolved to put a good face on it.

Before long three loud knocks announced the arrival of Madame Cornelis in a sedan-chair and I heard her ascending the stairs. She came in and seemed glad to see me but did not come and give me those caresses which I had a right to expect. She ran to her son and took him on her knee, but the sleepy boy did not respond to her kisses with any great warmth.

"He is very tired, like myself," said I, "and, considering that we are travellers in need of rest, you have kept us waiting a long time."

I do not know whether she would have answered at all or, if so, what her answer would have been, for just at that moment a servant came in and said that supper was ready. She rose and did me the honour to take my arm and we went into another room which I had not seen. The table was laid for four and I was curious enough to inquire who was the fourth person.

"It was to have been my daughter, but I left her behind, as, when I told her that you and her brother had arrived, she asked me if you were well."

"And you punished her for doing so?"

"Certainly, for in my opinion she ought to have asked for her brother first and then for you. Don't you think I was right?"

"Poor Sophie! I am sorry for her. Gratitude has evidently more influence over her than blood relationship."

"It is not a question of sentiment but of teaching young persons to think with propriety."

"Propriety is often far from proper."

The woman told her son that she was working hard to leave him a

fortune when she died, and that she had been obliged to summon him to England, as he was old enough to help her in her business.

"And how am I to help you, my dear mother?"

"I give twelve balls and twelve suppers to the nobility in the year and the same number to the middle classes. I have often as many as six hundred guests at two guineas a head. The expenses are enormous and, alone as I am, I must be robbed, for I can't be in two places at once. Now that you are here, you can keep everything under lock and key, keep the books, pay and receive accounts and see that everyone is properly attended to at the assemblies; in fine, you will perform the duties of the master."

"And do you think that I can do all that?"

"You will easily learn it."

"I think it will be very difficult."

"One of my secretaries will come and live with you and instruct you in everything. During the first year you will only have to acquire the English language and be present at my assemblies, that I may introduce you to the most distinguished people in London. You will get quite English before long."

"I would rather remain French."

"That's mere prejudice, my dear. You will like the sound of 'Mister Cornelis' by and by."

"Cornelis?"

"Yes, that is your name."

"It's a very funny one."

"I will write it down, so that you may not forget it."

Thinking that her dear son was joking, Madame Cornelis looked at me in some astonishment and told him to go to bed, which he did instantly. When we were alone, she said he struck her as badly brought up and too small for his age.

"I am very much afraid," said she, "that we shall have to begin his education all over again at this late date. What has he learnt in the last six years?"

"He might have learnt a great deal, for he went to the best boarding-school in Paris; but he learnt only what he liked, and what he liked was not much. He can play the flute, ride, fence, dance a minuet, change his shirt every day, answer politely, make a graceful bow, talk elegant trifles and dress well. As he never had any application, he doesn't know anything about literature; he can scarcely write, his spelling is abominable, his arithmetic limited and I doubt whether he knows in what continent England is situated."

"He has employed the six years well, certainly."

"Say, rather, he has wasted them; but he will waste many more."

"My daughter will laugh at him; but then it is I who have had the care of her education. He will be ashamed when he finds her so well instructed, though she is only eight."

"He will never see her at eight, if I know anything of reckoning; she is fully ten."

"I think I ought to know the age of my own daughter. She knows geography, history, languages and music; she argues correctly and behaves in a manner which is surprising in so young a child. All the ladies are in love with her. I keep her at a school of design all day; she is showing a great taste for drawing. She dines with me on Sundays and, if you care to come to dinner next Sunday, you will confess that I have not exaggerated her capacities."

It was Monday. I said nothing but thought it strange that she did not seem to consider that I was impatient to see my daughter. She should have asked me to meet her at supper the following evening.

"You are just in time," said she, "to witness the last assembly of the year, for in a few weeks all the nobility will leave town in order to pass the summer in the country. I can't give you a ticket, as they are issued only to the nobility, but you can come as my friend and keep close to me. You will see everything. If I am asked who you are, I will say that you have superintended the education of my son in Paris and have brought him back to me."

"You do me too much honour."

We continued talking till two o'clock in the morning and she told me all about the suit in which she was involved with Sir Frederick Fermer. He maintained that the house she had built at a cost of ten thousand guineas belonged to him, as he had furnished the money. In equity he was right, but according to English law wrong, for it was she who had paid the workmen, the contractors and the architect; it was she who had given and received receipts and signed all documents. The house, therefore, belonged to her and Fermer admitted as much; but he was claiming the sum he had furnished and here was the kernel of the whole case, for she had defied him to produce a single acknowledgement of money received.

"I confess," said this honest woman, "that you have often given me a thousand pounds at a time, but that was a friendly gift and nothing to be wondered at in a rich Englishman, considering that we were lovers and were living together."

She won her suit four times over in two years, but Fermer took advantage of the intricacies of English law to appeal again and again and now he had gone to the House of Lords, the appeal to which might last fifteen years.

"This suit," said the honest lady, "dishonours Fermer."

"I should think it did, but you surely don't think it honours you."

"Certainly I do."

"I don't quite understand how you make that out."

"I will explain it all to you."

"We will talk it over another time."

In the three hours we talked together, this woman did not once ask me how I was, whether I was comfortably lodged, how long I intended to stay in London or whether I had made much money. In short, she made no inquiries whatever about me, saying only with a smile but not without a purpose, "I never have a penny to spare."

Her receipts amounted to more than twenty-four thousand pounds per annum, but her expenses were enormous and she had debts.

I avenged myself on her indifference by not saying a word about myself. I was dressed simply but neatly and had no jewellery or diamonds about my person.

I went to bed annoyed with her but glad to have discovered the badness of her heart. In spite of my longing to see my daughter, I determined not to take any steps to meet her till the ensuing Sunday, when I was invited to dinner.

Early next morning I told Clairmont to put all my goods and chattels in a carriage and, when all was ready, I went to take leave of young Cornelis, telling him I was going to live in Pall Mall and leaving him my address.

"You are not going to stay with me, then?" said he.

"No, your mother doesn't know how to welcome me."

"I think you are right and I shall go back to Paris."

"Don't do anything so silly. Remember that here you are in your own home and in Paris you might not find a roof to shelter you. Farewell; I shall see you on Sunday."

I was soon settled in my new house and went out to call on M. Zuccato, the Venetian ambassador. I gave him M. Morosini's letter and he said coldly that he was glad to make my acquaintance. When I asked him to present me at Court, the insolent fool only replied with a smile, which might fairly be described as contemptuous. It was the aristocratic pride coming out, so I returned his smile with a cold bow and never set foot in his house again.

On leaving Zuccato, I called on Lord Egremont and, finding him ill, left my letter with the porter. He died a few days after, so M. Morosini's letters were both useless through no fault of his. We shall learn presently what was the result of his little note.

I then went to the Comte de Guerchi, the French ambassador, with a letter from the Marquis Chauvelin and I received a warm welcome. This nobleman asked me to dine with him the following day and told me that, if I liked, he would present me at Court after chapel on Sunday. It was at that ambassador's table that I made the acquaintance of the Chevalier d'Eon, the secretary of the embassy, who afterwards became famous. This Chevalier d'Eon was a handsome woman who had been a lawyer and a captain of dragoons before entering the diplomatic service; she served Louis XV as a valiant soldier and a diplomatist of consummate skill. In spite of her manly ways, I soon recognised her as a woman; her voice was not that of a *castrato* and her shape was too rounded to be a man's. I say nothing of the absence of hair on her face, as that might have been an accident.

In the first days of my stay in London I made the acquaintance of my bankers, who held at least three hundred thousand francs of my money. They all honoured my drafts and offered their services to me, but I did not make use of their good offices.

I visited the theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, but I

could not derive much enjoyment from the performances as I did not know a word of English. I dined at all the taverns, high and low, to get some insight into the peculiar manners of the English. In the morning I went on 'Change, where I made some friends. It was there that a merchant to whom I spoke got me a Negro servant who spoke English, French and Italian with equal facility, and the same individual procured me a cook who spoke French. I also visited the bagnios where a rich man can sup, bathe and sleep with a fashionable courtesan, of which species there are many in London. It makes a magnificent debauch and costs only six guineas. The expense may be reduced to a hundred francs, but economy in pleasure was not to my taste.

On Sunday I made an elegant toilette and went to Court about eleven and met the Comte de Guerchi, as we had arranged. He introduced me to George III, who spoke to me but in such a low voice that I could not understand him and had to reply by a bow. The Queen made up for the King, however, and I was delighted to observe that the proud ambassador from my beloved Venice was also present. When M. de Guerchi introduced me under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt, Zuccato looked astonished, for M. Morosini had called me Casanova in his letter. The Queen asked me from what part of France I came and, understanding from my answer that I was from Venice, she looked at the Venetian ambassador, who bowed, as if to say that he had no objection to make. Her Majesty then asked me if I knew the ambassadors extraordinary who had been sent to congratulate the King, and I replied that I had the pleasure of knowing them intimately and had spent three days in their society at Lyons, where M. Morosini gave me letters for my Lord d'Egremont and M. Zuccato.

"M. Querini amused me extremely," said the Queen. "He called me a little devil."

"He meant to say that Your Highness is as witty as an angel."

I longed for the Queen to ask me why I had not been presented by M. Zuccato, for I had a reply on the tip of my tongue that would have deprived the ambassador of his sleep for a week, while I should have slept soundly, for vengeance is a divine pleasure, especially when it is taken on the proud and foolish; but the whole conversation was a compound of nothings, as is usual in courts.

After my interview was over, I got into my sedan-chair and went to Soho Square. A man in court dress cannot walk the streets of London without being pelted with mud by the mob, while the gentlemen look on and laugh. All customs must be respected; they are all at once worthy and absurd.

When I got to the house of Madame Cornelis, I and my negro Jarbe were shown upstairs and conducted through a suite of gorgeous apartments to a room where the lady of the house was sitting with two English ladies and two English gentlemen. She received me with familiar politeness, made me sit down in an armchair beside her and

"Very good; but, as you like to be questioned, may I ask you why you were not presented by your own ambassador?"

"Because the Venetian ambassador would not present me, knowing that his government has a bone to pick with me."

By this time we had come to the dessert and poor Sophie had not uttered a syllable.

"Say something to M. de Seingalt," said her mother.

"I don't know what to say," she answered. "Tell M. de Seingalt to ask me some questions and I will answer to the best of my ability."

"Well, Sophie, tell me in what studies you are engaged at the present time."

"I am learning drawing; if you like, I will show you some of my work."

"I will look at it with pleasure; but tell me how you think you have offended me for you have a guilty air."

"I, sir? I do not think I have done anything amiss."

"Nor do I, my dear; but, as you do not look at me when you speak, I have decided you must be ashamed of something. Are you ashamed of your fine eyes? You blush. What have you done?"

"You are embarrassing her," said the mother. "Tell him, my dear, that you have done nothing, but that a feeling of modesty and respect prevents you from gazing at the persons you address."

"Yes," said I, "but, if modesty bids young ladies lower their eyes, politeness should make them raise them now and again."

No one replied to this objection, which was a sharp dig for the absurd woman; but after an interval of silence we rose from the table and Sophie went to fetch her drawings.

"I won't look at anything, Sophie, unless you look at me."

"Come," said her mother, "look at the gentleman."

She obeyed as quick as lightning and I saw the prettiest eyes imaginable

"Now," said I, "I know you again and perhaps you may remember having seen me."

"Yes, although it is six years since we met. I recognised you directly."

"And yet you did not look me in the face! If you knew how impolite it is to lower your eyes when you are addressing anyone, you would not do it. Who can have given you such a bad lesson?"

The child glanced towards her mother, who was standing by a window, and I saw who was her preceptress.

I felt that I had taken sufficient vengeance, and began to examine her drawings, to praise them in detail and congratulate her on her talents. I told her she ought to be thankful to have a mother who had given her so good an education. This indirect compliment pleased Madame Cornelis, and Sophie, now free from all restraint, gazed at me with an expression of childlike affection which ravished me. Her features bore the imprint of a noble soul within and I pitied her for having to grow up under the authority of a foolish mother. Sophie went to the piano,

played with feeling and then sang some Italian airs to the accompaniment of the guitar too well for her age. She was precocious and needed much more discretion in her upbringing than Madame Cornelis was able to give her.

When her singing had been applauded by the company, her mother told her to dance a minuet with her brother, who had learnt in Paris but danced badly for want of a good carriage. His sister told him so with a kiss and then asked me to dance with her, which I did very readily. Her mother, who thought she danced exquisitely, as was indeed the case, told her she must give me a kiss. She came up to me and, drawing her on my knee, I covered her face with kisses, which she returned with the greatest affection. Her mother laughed with all her heart and then Sophie, beginning to be self-conscious again, went up to her and asked her if she was angry. Her mother comforted her with a kiss.

After we had taken coffee, which was served in the French fashion, Madame Cornelis showed me a magnificent hall which she had built in which she could give supper to four hundred persons seated at one horseshoe-shaped table. She told me, and I could easily believe her, that there was not such another in all London.

The last assembly was given before the prorogation of Parliament; it was to take place in four or five days. She had a score of pretty girls in her service and a dozen footmen, all in full livery.

"They all rob me," said she, "but I have to put up with it. What I need is a sharp man to help me and to watch over my interests; if I had such an one, I should make an immense fortune in a comparatively short time, for, when it is a question of pleasure, the English do not care what they spend."

I told her I hoped she would find such a man and make the fortune, and then I left her, admiring her enterprise.

When I left Soho Square, I went to St. James's Park to see Lady Harrington, for whom I bore a letter, as I have mentioned. This lady lived within the precincts of the Court and received company every Sunday. It was allowable to play in her house, as the park is under the jurisdiction of the Crown. In any other place there is no playing cards or singing on Sundays. The town abounds in spies and, if they have reason to suppose that there is any gaming or music going on, they watch for their opportunity, slip into the house and arrest all the bad Christians who are diverting themselves in a manner which is thought innocent enough in any other country. But, to make up for this severity, the Englishman may go in perfect liberty to the tavern or the brothel and sanctify the Sabbath as he pleases.

I called on Lady Harrington and, having sent up my letter, she summoned me into her presence. I found her in the midst of about thirty persons, but the hostess was easily distinguished by the air of welcome she had for me.

After I had made my bow, she told me she had seen me at Court in the morning and that, without knowing who I was, she had been de-

sirous of making my acquaintance. Our conversation lasted three-quarters of an hour and was composed of those frivolous observations and idle questions which are commonly addressed to a traveller.

The lady was forty but still handsome. She was well known for her gallantries and her influence at Court. She introduced me to her husband and her four daughters, charming girls of a marriageable age. She asked me why I had come to London when everybody was on the point of going out of town. I told her that, as I always obeyed the impulses of the moment, I should find it difficult to answer her question; besides, I intended staying a year, so that the pleasure would be deferred but not lost.

My reply seemed to please her by its character of English independence and she offered with exquisite grace to do all in her power for me.

"In the meanwhile," said she, "we will begin by letting you see all the nobility at Madame Cornelis's on Thursday next. I can give you a ticket to admit you to ball and supper. It is two guineas."

I gave her the money and she took the ticket again, writing on it, "Paid—Harrington."

"Is this formality necessary, my lady?"

"Yes, or they would ask you for the money at the door."

I did not think it necessary to say anything about my connection with the lady of Soho Square.

While Lady Harrington was making up a rubber at whist, she asked if I had any other letters for ladies.

"Yes," said I, "I have one which I intend to present to-morrow. It is a singular letter, being merely a portrait."

"Have you got it about you?"

"Yes, milady."

"May I see it?"

"Certainly. Here it is."

"It is the Duchess of Northumberland. Let us go and give it to her."

"With pleasure."

"Just wait till they have marked the game."

Lord Percy had given me this portrait as a letter of introduction to his mother.

"My dear duchess," said Lady Harrington, "here is a letter of introduction which this gentleman begs to present to you."

"I know; it is M. de Seingalt. My son has written to me about him. I am delighted to see you, Chevalier, and I hope you will come to see me. I receive thrice a week."

"Will your ladyship allow me to present my valuable letter in person at your house?"

"Certainly. You are right."

I played a rubber of whist for very small stakes and lost fifteen guineas, which I paid on the spot. Directly afterwards Lady Harrington took me aside and gave me a lesson which I deem worthy of record.

"You paid in gold," said she. "I suppose you had no bank notes about you?"

"Yes, milady, I have notes for fifty and a hundred pounds."

"You ought to have exchanged one of them or waited till another time to pay, for in England to pay in gold is a solecism pardonable only in a stranger. Perhaps you noticed that the lady smiled?"

"Yes. Who is she?"

"Lady Coventry, sister of the Duchess of Hamilton."

"Ought I to apologise?"

"Not at all, the offence is not one of those which require an apology. She must have been more surprised than offended, for she made fifteen shillings by your paying her in gold."

I was vexed by this small mischance, for Lady Coventry was an exquisitely beautiful brunette. I consoled myself, however, without much trouble.

The same day I made the acquaintance of Lord Hervey, the nobleman who conquered Havana, a pleasant and intelligent person. He had married Miss Chudleigh, but the marriage was annulled. This celebrated Miss Chudleigh was maid of honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales and afterwards became Duchess of Kingston. As her history is well known, I shall say something more of her in due course. I went home well enough pleased with my day's work.

The next day I began dining at home and found my cook very satisfactory, for, besides the usual English dishes, he was acquainted with the French system of cooking and did fricandeaus, cutlets, ragouts and, above all, the excellent French soup which is one of the principal glories of France.

My table and my house were not enough for my happiness. I was alone and the reader will know by this time that Nature had not intended me for a hermit. I had neither a pretty mistress nor a witty friend and in London one may invite a man to dinner at a tavern, where he pays for himself, but not to one's own table. One day I was invited by a younger son of the Duke of Bedford to eat oysters and drink a bottle of champagne. I accepted the invitation, and he ordered the oysters and the champagne, but we drank two bottles and he made me pay half the price of the second bottle. Such are manners on the other side of the Channel. People laughed in my face when I said that I did not care to dine at a tavern as I could not get any soup.

"Are you ill?" they said. "Soup is fit only for invalids."

The Englishman is entirely carnivorous. He eats very little bread and calls himself economical because he spares himself the expense of soup and dessert, which circumstance made me remark that an English dinner is like eternity—it has no beginning and no end. Soup is considered very extravagant, as even the servants refuse to eat the meat from which it has been made; they say it is fit only to give to dogs. The salt beef which they use is certainly excellent. I cannot say the same for their beer, which was so bitter that I could not drink it. However, I

could not be expected to like beer after the excellent French wines with which the wine merchant supplied me—at a very heavy cost.

I had been a week in my new home without seeing Martinelli. He came on a Monday morning and I asked him to dine with me. He told me he had to go to the Museum and my curiosity to see the famous collection which is such an honour to England made me accompany him. It was there that I made the acquaintance of Dr. Mati, of whom I shall speak in due course.

At dinner Martinelli made himself extremely pleasant. He had a profound knowledge of the English manners and customs which it behooved me to know if I wished to get on. I happened to speak of the impoliteness of which I had been guilty in paying a gaming debt in gold instead of paper, and on this text he preached me a sermon on the national prosperity, demonstrating that the preference given to paper shows the confidence which is felt in the Bank, which may or may not be misplaced but which is certainly a source of wealth. This confidence might be destroyed by a too large issue of paper money and, if that ever took place by reason of a protracted or unfortunate war, bankruptcy would be inevitable and no one could calculate the final results.

After a long discussion on politics, national manners and literature, in which subjects Martinelli shone, we went to Drury Lane Theatre, where I had a specimen of the rough insular manners. By some accident or other the company could not give the play that had been announced and the audience was in a tumult. Garrick, the celebrated actor who was buried twenty years later in Westminster Abbey, came forward and tried in vain to restore order. He was obliged to retire behind the curtain. Then the King, the Queen and all the fashionables left the theatre and in less than an hour the house was gutted, till nothing but the bare walls was left.

After this destruction, which went on without any authority interposing, the mad populace rushed to the taverns to consume gin and beer. In a fortnight the theatre was refitted and the play announced again and, when Garrick appeared before the curtain to implore the indulgence of the house, a voice from the pit shouted, "On your knees!" A thousand voices took up the cry "On your knees!" and the English Roscius was obliged to kneel down and beg forgiveness. Then came a thunder of applause and everything was over. Such are the English and, above all, the Londoners. They hoot the King and the royal family when they appear in public and the consequence is that they are never seen, save on great occasions, when order is kept by hundreds of constables.

One day as I was walking by myself, I saw Sir Augustus Hervey, whose acquaintance I had made, speaking to a gentleman, whom he left to come to me. I asked him whom he had been speaking to.

"That's the brother of Earl Ferrers," said he, "who was hanged a couple of months ago for murdering one of his people."

"And you speak to his brother?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Is he not dishonoured by the execution of his relative?"

"Dishonoured! Certainly not. Even his brother was not dishonoured. He broke the law, but he paid for it with his life and owed society nothing more. He's a man of honour who played high and lost, that's all. I don't know that there is any penalty in the statute book which dishonours the culprit; that would be tyrannical and we would not bear it. I may break any law I like, so long as I am willing to pay the penalty. It is a dishonour only when the criminal tries to escape punishment by base or cowardly actions."

"How do you mean?"

"To ask for the royal mercy, to beg forgiveness of the people and the like."

"How about escaping from justice?"

"That is no dishonour, for to fly is an act of courage, it continues the defiance of the law and, if the law cannot exact obedience, so much the worse for it. It is an honour for you to have escaped from the tyranny of your magistrates; your flight from The Leads was a virtuous action. In such cases man fights with death and flees from it. *Vir fugiens denuo pugnabit.*"

"What do you think of highway robbers then?"

"I detest them as wretches dangerous to society, but I pity them when I reflect that they are always riding toward the gallows. You go out in a coach to pay a visit to a friend three or four miles out of London. A determined and agile-looking fellow springs upon you with his pistol in his hand and says, 'Your money or your life!' What would you do in such a case?"

"If I had a pistol handy, I would blow out his brains and, if not, I would give him my purse and call him a scoundrelly assassin."

"You would do wrong in both cases. If you killed him, you would be hanged, for you have no right to take the law into your own hands; and, if you called him an assassin, he would tell you he was no assassin because he attacked you openly and gave you a free choice. Nay, he is generous, for he might kill you and take your money as well. You might, indeed, tell him he has an evil trade, and he would tell you you were right and that he would try to avoid the gallows as long as possible. He would then thank you and advise you never to drive out of London without being accompanied by a mounted servant, as then no robber would dare to attack you. We English always carry two purses on our journeys, a small one for the robbers and a large one for ourselves."

What answer could I make to such arguments, based as they were upon the national customs? England is a rich sea but strewn with reefs, and those who voyage there would do well to take precautions. Sir Augustus Hervey's disquisition gave me great pleasure.

Going from one topic to another, as is always the way with a desultory conversation, Sir Augustus deplored the fate of an unhappy Englishman who had absconded to France with seventy thousand pounds and had been brought back to London and was to be hanged.

"How could that be?" I asked.

"The Crown asked the Duc de Nivernais to extradite him and Louis XV granted the request to make England assent to some articles of the peace. It was an act unworthy of a king, for it violates the rights of nations. It is true that the man is a wretch, but that has nothing to do with the principle of the thing."

"Of course they got back the seventy thousand pounds?"

"Not a shilling of it."

"How was that?"

"Because no money was found on him. He appears to have left his little fortune to his wife, who may marry again, as she is still young and pretty."

"I wonder the police have not been after her."

"Such a thing is never thought of. What could they do? It's not likely she would confess that her husband left her the stolen money. The law says robbers shall be hanged, but it says nothing about what they have stolen, as they are supposed to have made away with it. Then, if we had to take into account the thieves who had returned their booty and those who had dissipated it, we should have to make two sets of laws and all manner of allowances; the end of that would be inextricable confusion. It seems to us Englishmen that it would not be just to ordain two punishments for theft. The robber becomes the owner of what he has stolen; true, he got it by violence, but it is none the less his, for he can do what he likes with it. That being the case, everyone should be careful to keep what he has, since he knows that, once stolen, he will never see it again. I took Havana from Spain; that was robbery on a large scale."

He talked at once like a philosopher and a faithful subject of his king.

Engaged in this discussion we walked towards the Duchess of Northumberland's, where I made the acquaintance of Lady Rochefort, whose husband had just been appointed Spanish ambassador. This lady's gallantries were innumerable and furnished a fresh topic of conversation every day.

The day before the assembly at Soho Square Martinelli dined with me and told me that Madame Cornelis was heavily in debt and dared not go out except on Sundays, when debtors are privileged.

"The enormous and unnecessary expense which she puts herself to," said he, "will soon bring her to ruin. She owes four times the amount of her assets, even counting in the house, which is a doubtful item, as it is the subject of litigation."

This news distressed me only for her children's sake, for I thought that she herself well deserved such a fate.

I WENT in due time to the assembly and the secretary at the door wrote down my name as I handed in my ticket. When Madame Cornelis saw me, she said she was delighted I had come in by ticket and that she had had a strong suspicion I would come.

"You might have spared yourself the trouble of guessing," said I, "for, after hearing that I had been to Court, you might have known that a matter of two guineas would not keep me away. I am very sorry, for our old friendship's sake, that I did not pay the money to you; you might have known that I would not condescend to be present in the modest manner you indicated."

This address, delivered with an ironical accent, embarrassed Madame Cornelius, but Lady Harrington, a great supporter of hers, came to her rescue.

"I have a number of guineas to hand over to you, my dear Cornelis, amongst others two from M. de Seingalt, who, I fancy, is an old friend of yours. Nevertheless, I did not dare mention it to him," she added, with a sly glance in my direction.

"Why not, milady? I have known Madame Cornelis for many years."

"I should think you had," she answered, laughing, "and I congratulate you both. I suppose you know the delightful Miss Sophie, too, Chevalier?"

"Certainly, my lady; whoso knows the mother knows the daughter."

"Quite so, quite so."

Sophie was standing by and, after kissing her fondly, Lady Harrington said, "If you love yourself, you ought to love her, for she is the image of you."

"Yes, it is a freak of Nature."

"I think there is something more than a freak in this instance."

With these words, the lady took Sophie's hand and, leaning on my arm, led us through the crowd and I had to bear in silence the remarks of everyone.

"There is Madame Cornelis's husband."

"That must be M. Cornelis."

"Oh! there can be no doubt about it."

"No, no," said Lady Harrington, "you are all quite wrong."

I got tired of these remarks, which were all founded on the remarkable likeness between myself and Sophie. I wanted Lady Harrington to let the child go, but she was too much amused to do so.

"Stay by me," she said, "if you want to know the names of the guests." She sat down, making me sit on one side and Sophie on the other.

Madame Cornelis then made her appearance and everyone asked her the same questions and made the same remarks about me. She said bravely that I was her best and her oldest friend and that the likeness between me and her daughter might possibly be capable of explanation. Everyone laughed and said it was very natural that it should

be so. To change the subject, Madame Cornelis remarked that Sophie had learnt the minuet and danced it admirably.

"Then fetch a violin player," said Lady Harrington, "that we may have the pleasure of witnessing the young artist's performance."

The ball had not yet begun and, as soon as the violinist appeared, I stepped forward and danced with Sophie, to the delight of the select circle of spectators.

The ball lasted all night without ceasing, as the company ate by relays and at all times and hours, the waste and prodigality were worthy of a prince's palace. I made the acquaintance of all the nobility and the royal family, for they were all there, with the exception of the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales. Madame Cornelis must have received more than twelve hundred guineas, but the outlay was enormous, without any control or safeguard against thefts, which must have been perpetrated on all sides. She tried to introduce her son to everybody, but the poor lad looked like a victim and did nothing but make profound bows. I pitied him from my heart.

As soon as I got home, I went to bed and spent the whole of the next day there. The day after I went to the Star Tavern, as I had been told that the prettiest girls in London resorted there. Lord Pembroke gave me this piece of information; he went there very frequently himself. When I got to the tavern, I asked for a private room and the landlord, perceiving that I did not know English, accosted me in French and came to keep me company. I was astonished at his grave and dignified manner of speaking and did not like to tell him that I wanted to dine with a pretty Englishwoman. At last, however, I summoned up courage to say, with a great deal of circumlocution, that I did not know whether Lord Pembroke had deceived me in informing me that I should find the prettiest girls in London at his house.

"No, sir," said he, "milord did not deceive you, and you can have as many as you like."

"That's what I came for."

He called out some name and, a tidy-looking lad making his appearance, he told him to get me a wench, just as though he were ordering a bottle of champagne. The lad went out and presently a girl of herculean proportions entered.

"Sir," said I, "I don't like the looks of this girl."

"Give a shilling for the porters and send her away. We don't trouble ourselves about ceremonies in London."

This put me at my ease, so I paid my shilling and called for a prettier wench. The second was worse than the first and I sent her away and ten others after her, while I could see that my fastidiousness amused the landlord immensely.

"I'll see no more girls," said I at last. "Let me have a good dinner. I think the procurer must have been making game of me to please the porters."

"It's very likely; indeed, it often happens so when a gentleman does not give the name and address of the wench he wants."

In the evening, as I was walking in St. James's Park, I remembered it was a Ranelagh evening and, wishing to see the place, I took a coach and drove there, intending to amuse myself till midnight and find a beauty to my taste.

I was pleased with the Ranelagh rotunda. I had some tea and danced some minuets but made no acquaintances and, although I saw several very pretty women, I did not dare launch an abrupt offensive. I got bored and, as it was near midnight I went out, thinking to find my coach (for which I had not paid) still there, but it was gone and I did not know what to do. An extremely pretty woman, waiting for her carriage in the doorway, noticed my distress and said that, if I lived anywhere near Whitehall, she could take me home. I thanked her gratefully and told her where I lived. Her carriage came up, her man opened the door and she stepped in on my arm, telling me to sit beside her and to stop the carriage when it got to my house.

As soon as we were in the carriage, I burst out into expressions of gratitude and, after telling her my name, I expressed my regret at not having seen her at Soho Square.

"I was not in London," she replied. "I returned from Bath to-day."

I rhapsodised over my good fortune in having met her. I covered her hands with kisses and dared to kiss her on the cheek and, finding that she smiled graciously, I fastened my lips to hers and before long had given her an unequivocal mark of the ardour with which she inspired me.

She took my attentions so easily that I flattered myself I had not displeased her, and I begged her to tell me where I could call on her and pay my court while I remained in London, but she replied, "We shall see each other again; be discreet."

I swore secrecy and urged her no more. Directly after the carriage stopped, I kissed her hand and was set down at my door, well pleased with the ride home.

For a fortnight I saw nothing of her, but I met her again in a house where Lady Harrington had told me to present myself, giving her name. It was Lady Betty Germain's and I found her out but was asked to sit down and wait, as she would be in soon. I was pleasantly surprised to find my fair friend of Ranelagh in the room, reading a newspaper. I conceived the idea of asking her to introduce me to Lady Betty, so I went up to her and proffered my request, but she replied politely that she could not do so, not having the honour to know my name.

"I have told you my name, madame. Do you not remember me?"

"I remember you perfectly, but a piece of folly does not confer a title of acquaintance."

I was dumbfounded at this extraordinary reply, while the lady calmly returned to her newspaper and did not speak another word till the arrival of Lady Betty.

This fair philosopher talked for two hours without giving the least sign of knowing who I was, although she answered me with great

politeness whenever I ventured to address her. She turned out to be a lady of high birth and great reputation.

Happening to call on Martinelli, I asked him who was the pretty girl who was kissing her hands to me from the house opposite. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that she was a dancer named Binetti. Four years before she had done me a great service at Stuttgart, but I did not know she was in London. I took leave of Martinelli to go to see her and did so all the more eagerly when I heard that she had parted from her husband, though they were obliged to dance together at the Haymarket.

She received me with open arms, telling me she had recognised me directly.

"I am surprised, my dear dean," said she, "to see you in London."

She called me "dean" because I was the oldest of her friends.

"Nor did I know that you were here," I replied. "I came to town after the close of the opera. How is it that you are not living with your husband?"

"Because he games, loses and despoils me of all I possess. Besides, a woman of my condition, if she be married, cannot hope that a rich lover will come to see her, while, if she be alone, she can receive visits without constraint."

"I shouldn't have thought they would be afraid of Binetti; he used to be far from jealous."

"Nor is he jealous now; but you should understand that there is an English law which allows the husband to arrest his wife and her lover if he find them *in flagrante delicto*. He needs only two witnesses and it is enough that they are sitting together on a bed. The lover is forced to pay the husband the half of all he possesses. Several rich Englishmen have been caught in this way and now they are very shy of visiting married women, especially Italians."

"So you have much to be thankful for. You enjoy perfect liberty, can receive any visitors you like and are in a fair way to make a fortune."

"Alas! my dear friend, you do not know all. When he has information from his spies that I have had a visitor, he comes to me in a sedan-chair at night and threatens to turn me out into the street if I do not give him all the money I have. He is a terrible rascal!"

I left the poor woman, after giving her my address and telling her to come and dine with me whenever she liked. She had given me a lesson on the subject of visiting ladies. England has very good laws, but most of them are capable of abuse. The oath which jurymen have to take to execute them to the letter has caused several to be interpreted in a manner absolutely contrary to the intention of the legislators, thus placing the judges in a difficult predicament. Thus new laws have constantly to be made and new glosses to explain the old ones.

My lord Pembroke, seeing me at my window, came and, after examining my house (including the kitchen, where the cook was at work) told me there was not a nobleman in town who had such a well fur-

nished and comfortable house. He made a calculation and told me that, if I wanted to entertain my friends, I would require three hundred pounds a month. "You can't live here," said he, "without a pretty girl and those who know that you keep bachelor's hall are of opinion that you are very wise and will save a great deal of useless expense."

"Do you keep a girl in your house, milord?"

"No, for I am unfortunate enough to lose my liking for a woman after I have had her for a day."

"Then you require a fresh one every day?"

"Yes, and, without being as comfortable as you, I spend four times as much. Bear in mind that I am a bachelor and that I live in London like a stranger. I never dine in my own house. I wonder at your dining alone."

"I can't speak English, I like soup and good wine, and that is enough to keep me from your taverns."

"I can well understand, with your French tastes."

"You will admit that they are not bad tastes."

"You are right, for, good Englishman though I am, I get on very well in Paris."

He burst out laughing when I told him how I had dispatched a score of wenches at the Star Tavern and that my disappointment was due to him.

"I did not tell you the names of those I send for and there I made a mistake."

"Yes, you ought to have told me."

"But, even if I had, they wouldn't have come, for they are not at the orders of the procuress. If you will promise to pay them as I do, I will give you some tickets which will make them come."

"Can I have them here?"

"Just as you like."

"That will be most convenient for me. Write out the tickets and pick preferably those who know French."

"That's the difficulty, the prettiest speak only English."

"Never mind; we shall understand each other well enough for the purpose, I dare say."

He wrote several tickets for four and six guineas each, but one was marked twelve guineas.

"She is doubly pretty, is she?" said I.

"Not exactly, but she cuckolds a duke of Great Britain, who keeps her and uses her only once or twice a month."

"Would you do me the honour of testing the skill of my cook?"

"Certainly, but I can't make an appointment."

"And supposing I am out?"

"I'll go to the tavern."

Having nothing better to do, I sent Jarbe to one of the four-guinea wenches, telling him to advise her that she would dine with me. She came. She did not attract me sufficiently to make me attempt more than some slight toying. She went away well pleased with her four

guineas, which she had done nothing to earn. Another wench, also at four guineas, supped with me the following evening. She had been very pretty and indeed still was, but she was too melancholy and quiet for my taste and I could not make up my mind to tell her to undress.

The third day, not feeling inclined to try another ticket, I went to Covent Garden and, on meeting an attractive young person, I accosted her in French and asked if she would sup with me.

"How much will you give me at dessert?"

"Three guineas."

"Come along."

After the play I ordered a good supper for two and she displayed an appetite after mine own heart. When we had supped, I asked her name and address and was astonished to find that she was one of the girls whom Lord Pembroke had appraised at six guineas. I concluded that it was best to do one's own business or, at any rate, not to employ noblemen as agents. As to the other tickets, they procured me but little pleasure. The twelve-guinea one, which I had reserved for the last as a choice morsel, pleased me the least of all and I did not care to cuckold the noble duke who was keeping her.

Lord Pembroke was young, handsome, rich and full of wit. I went to see him one day and found him just getting out of bed. He said he would take a walk with me and told his valet to shave him.

"But," said I, "there's not a trace of beard on your face."

"There never is," said he. "I get myself shaved three times a day." "Three times."

"Yes, whenever I change my shirt, I wash my hands and when I wash my hands, I have to wash my face, and the proper way to wash a man's face is with a razor."

"When do you make these three ablutions?"

"When I get up, when I dress for dinner and when I go to bed, for I should not like the woman who is sleeping with me to feel my beard."

We had a short walk together and then I left him, as I had some writing to do. As we parted, he asked if I was dining at home. I replied in the affirmative and, foreseeing that he intended dining with me, I warned my cook to serve us well, though I did not let him know that I expected a nobleman to dinner. Vanity has more than one string to its bow.

I had scarcely got home when Madame Binetti came in and said that, if she was not in the way, she would be glad to dine with me. I gave her a warm welcome and she said I was really doing her a great service, as her husband would suffer the torments of Hell in trying to find out with whom she had dined.

This woman still pleased and, though she was thirty-five, nobody would have taken her for more than twenty-five. Her appearance was in every way attractive. Her lips were of the hue of the rose, disclosing two exquisite rows of teeth. A fine complexion, splendid eyes and a forehead where Innocence might well have been enthroned, all this made an exquisite picture. If you add to this that her bosom was of the

rarest proportions, you will understand that more fastidious tastes than mine would have been satisfied with her.

She had not been in my house half an hour when Lord Pembroke came in. They both uttered an exclamation and the nobleman told me he had been in love with her for the past six months and had written ardent letters to her, of which she had taken no notice.

"I never would have anything to do with him," said she, "because he is the greatest profligate in all England. And it's a pity," she added, "because he is a kind-hearted nobleman."

This explanation was followed by a score of kisses and I saw that they were agreed.

We had a choice dinner in the French style and Lord Pembroke swore he had not eaten so good a dinner for a year past.

"I am sorry for you," he said, "when I think of you being alone every day."

Madame Binetti was as much a *gourmet* as the Englishman and, when we rose from table, we felt inclined to pass from the worship of Comus to that of Venus, but the lady was too experienced to give the Englishman anything more than a few trifling kisses.

I busied myself with turning over the leaves of some books I had bought the day before, and left them together to their heart's content; but, to prevent them asking me to invite them again to dinner, I said that I hoped chance would bring about another such meeting on some other occasion.

At six o'clock, after my guests had left, I dressed and went to Vauxhall, where I met a French officer named Malingan, to whom I had given some money at Aix-la-Chapelle. He said he would like to talk with me, so I gave him my name and address. I also met a well known character, the Chevalier Goudar, who talked to me about gaming and women. Malingan introduced me to an individual who, he said, might be very useful to me in London. He was a man of forty and styled himself son of the late Theodore, pretender to the throne of Corsica, who had died miserably in London fourteen years before, after having been imprisoned seven years for debt. I would have done better if I had never gone to Vauxhall that evening.

The entrance fee at Vauxhall was half the sum charged at Ranelagh, but, in spite of that, the amusements were of the most varied kinds. There was good fare, music, walks in solitary alleys, thousands of lamps and a crowd of London beauties, both high and low.

Amidst all these pleasures I was bored because I had no girl to enjoy my good table with me or share my charming home and make it dear to me. I had been in London six weeks and in no other place had I been so long alone.

My house seemed intended for keeping a mistress with all decency and, as I had the virtue of constancy, a mistress was all I needed to make me happy. But how was I to find a woman who should be the equal of those women I had loved before? I had already seen half a hundred girls whom the town pronounced to be pretty and who

did not strike me as even passable. I thought the matter over continually and at last an odd idea struck me.

I called the old housekeeper and told her by the servant, who acted as my interpreter, that I wanted to let the second or third floor for the sake of company and, although I was at perfect liberty to do what I liked with the house, I would give her half a guinea a week extra. Forthwith I ordered her to post the following sign in the window:

"Second or third floor to be let, furnished, to a young lady speaking English and French, who receives no visitors either by day or by night."

The old Englishwoman, who had seen something of the world, began to laugh so violently when the document was translated to her that I thought she would choke.

"What are you laughing at, my worthy woman?"

"Because this notice is a laughing matter."

"I suppose you think I shall have no applications?"

"Not at all; the doorstep will be crowded from morn to night, but I shall leave it all to Fanny. Only tell me how much to ask."

"I will arrange about the rent in my interview with the young lady. I don't think I shall have so many inquiries, for the young lady is to speak French and English and also to be respectable. She must not receive any visits, not even from her father and mother, if she has them."

"But there will be a mob in front of the house reading the notice."

"All the better. Nothing is the worse for being a little odd."

It happened just as the old woman had foretold; as soon as the notice was up, everybody stopped to read it, made various comments and passed on. On the second day after it was up, my negro told me that my notice was printed in full in the *St. James's Chronicle*, with some amusing remarks. I had the paper brought up to me and Fanny translated it. It ran as follows:

"The landlord of the second and third floors probably occupies the first floor himself. He must be a man of the world and of good taste, for he wants a young and pretty lodger and, as he forbids her to receive visits, he will have to keep her company himself."

It added:

"The landlord should take care lest he become his own dupe, for it is very likely that the pretty lodger would take the room only to sleep in and possibly to sleep in only now and then, and, if she chose, she would have a perfect right to refuse to receive the proprietor's visits."

These sensible remarks delighted me, for, after reading them, I felt forewarned.

Such matters as these give their chief interest to the English newspapers. They are allowed to gossip about everything and the writers have the knack of making the merest trifles seem amusing. Happy is the nation where anything may be written and anything said!

Lord Pembroke was the first to come and congratulate me on my idea and he was succeeded by Martinelli, who expressed some fears as

to the possible consequences "For," said he, "there are plenty of women in London who would come and lodge with you to be your ruin."

"In that case," I answered, "it would be a case of Greek meeting Greek. However, we shall see. If I am taken in, people will have the fullest right to laugh at me, for I have been warned."

I will not trouble my readers with an account of the hundred women who came in the first ten days and whom I refused on one pretext or another, though some of them were not wanting in grace and beauty. But one day, when I was at dinner, I received a visit from a girl of from twenty to twenty-four years, simply but elegantly dressed, her features were sweet and gracious, though somewhat grave, her complexion pale and her hair black. She gave me a bow which I had to rise to return and, as I remained standing, she politely begged me not to put myself out, but to continue my dinner. I begged her to be seated and to take dessert, but she refused with an air of modesty which delighted me.

This fair lady said, not in French, but in Italian worthy of a Siennese, its purity was so perfect, that she hoped I would let her have a room on the third floor and that she would gladly submit to all my conditions.

"You may make use of only one room if you like, but all the floor will belong to you."

"Although the notice says the rooms will be let cheaply, I shall not be able to afford more than one room. Two shillings a week is all I can spend."

"That's exactly what I want for the whole suite of rooms, so you can use them all. My maid will wait on you, get you whatever food you may require and wash your linen as well. You can also employ her to do your errands, so that you need not go out for trifles."

"Then I will dismiss my maid," she said. "She robs me of little, it is true, but still too much for my small means. I will tell your maid what food to buy for me every day, and she shall have six sols a week for her pains."

"That will be ample. I should advise you to apply to my cook's wife, who will get your dinner and supper for you as cheaply as you could buy your food outside."

"I hardly think so, for I am ashamed to tell you how little I spend."

"Even if you spend only two sols a day, she will give you two sols' worth. All the same, I advise you to be content with what you get from the kitchen, without troubling about the price, for I usually have provision made for four, though I dine alone, and the rest is the cook's perquisite. I merely advise you to the best of my ability and I hope you will not be offended at my interest in your welfare."

"Really, sir, you are too generous."

"Wait a moment and you will see how everything will be settled comfortably."

I told Clairmont to order up the maid and the cook's wife and I said

to the latter, "For how much could you provide dinner and supper for this young lady, who is not rich and wants to eat only to live?"

"I can do it very cheaply, for you usually eat alone and have enough for four."

"Very good, then I hope you will treat her very well for the sum she gives you."

"I can afford only five sols a day."

"That will do nicely."

I gave orders that the sign should be taken down directly and that the young lady's room should be made comfortable. When the maid and the cook's wife had left the room, the young lady told me that she would go out only on Sundays to hear mass at the Bavarian ambassador's chapel and once a month to a person who gave her three guineas to support her.

"You can go out when you like," said I, "and without rendering an account to anybody of your movements."

She begged me not to bring anyone to her apartment and to tell the porter to deny her to anyone who might come to the door to make inquiries. I promised that her wishes should be respected, and she went away saying that she was going for her trunk.

I immediately ordered my household to treat her with the utmost respect. The old housekeeper told me that she had paid the first week in advance, taking a receipt, and had gone, as she had come, in a sedan-chair. Then the worthy old woman made free to tell me to be on my guard.

"Against what? If I fall in love with her, so much the better; that is just what I want. What name did she give you?"

"Mistress Pauline. She was quite pale when she came and she went away covered with blushes."

I was delighted to hear it. I did not want a woman merely to satisfy my natural desires, for such can be found easily enough; I wished for someone whom I could love. I expected beauty of both body and soul and my love increased with the difficulties and obstacles I saw before me. As to failure, I confess I did not give it a moment's thought, for there is not a woman in the world who can resist constant and loving attentions, especially when her lover is ready to make great sacrifices.

When I got back from the theatre in the evening, the maid told me that the lady had modestly chosen a small room in the rear, suitable only for a servant. She had had a moderate supper, drinking only water, and had begged the cook's wife to send her up only soup and one dish, to which the woman had replied that she must take what was served and what she did not eat would do for the servant.

"When she had finished, she shut herself up to write and wished me good evening with much politeness."

"What is she going to take in the morning?"

"I asked her, and she said she would take only a little bread."

"Then you had better tell her that it is the custom of the house for the cook to serve everybody in the morning with coffee, chocolate or

tea, according to taste, and that I shall be pained if she refuses to fare like the rest of us. But don't tell her I said so. Here's a crown for you and you shall have one every week if you will wait upon and care for her properly."

Before going to bed, I wrote her a polite note, begging her to leave the small room. She did so, but she went into another back room. However, she consented to take coffee for breakfast. Wishing to make her dine and sup with me, I was dressing myself and preparing to proffer my request in such a way as to make a refusal impossible when young Cornelis was announced. I received him smilingly and thanked him for the first visit he had paid me in the course of six weeks.

"Mamma would never allow me to come. I tried to do so a score of times without her leave. Read this letter and you will find something which will surprise you."

I opened the letter and read as follows:

"Yesterday a bailiff waited for my door to be opened and then slipped in and arrested me. I was obliged to go with him and I am now in the sponging-house and, if I can't get bail by to-day, he will take me to King's Bench Prison. The bail I require is to the amount of two hundred pounds, to pay a bill which has fallen due. Dear friend, come and succour me or else my other creditors will get wind of my imprisonment and I shall be ruined. You surely will not allow that to happen, if not for my sake at least for the sake of my innocent children. You cannot bail me yourself but you can easily get a householder to do so. If you have the time, come and call on me and I will show you that I could not help signing the bill, otherwise I could not have given my last ball, as the whole of my plate and china was pledged."

I felt angry with the impudent woman who had hitherto paid me so little attention, and I wrote that I could only pity her and had no time to go and see her, and that I should be ashamed to ask anyone to bail her out.

When young Cornelis had gone away in a melancholy mood, I told Clairmont to ask Pauline if she would allow me to bid her good day. She sent word that I was at liberty to do so and, on going upstairs to her room, I found her sitting at a table on which were several books. Some linen on a chest of drawers did not give me the idea that she was very poor.

"I am immensely obliged," said she, "for all your goodness to me."

"Say nothing of that, madame; it is I who have need of your goodness."

"What can I do to show my gratitude?"

"Could you trouble yourself to take your meals with me? When I am alone, I eat like an ogre and my health suffers. If you do not feel inclined to grant me that favour, do not hesitate to refuse and I assure you, you shall fare just as well as if you had acceded to my request."

"I shall be delighted to dine and sup with you, sir, whenever you are alone and wish to send for me. Nevertheless, I am not sure that my society will entertain you."

"Very good. I am grateful to you and I promise you shall never repent of your kindness. I will do my best to entertain you and I hope I shall succeed, for you have inspired me with the liveliest interest. We will dine at one to-day."

I did not sit down or look at her books or even ask if she had spent a good night. The only thing I noted was that she had looked pale and careworn when I came in and that, when I went out her cheeks were the colour of the rose.

I went for a walk in the park, feeling quite taken with this charming woman and resolved to make her love me, for I did not want to owe anything to gratitude. I felt curious to know where she came from, and suspected she was Italian, but I determined to ask her no questions for fear of offending her.

When I got home, Pauline came down of her own free will and I was delighted with this, which I took for a good omen. As we had half an hour before us, I asked her how she found her health.

"Nature," she replied, "has favoured me with such a good constitution that I have never had the least sickness in my life, except on the sea."

"You have made a sea voyage then?"

"I must have done so to come to England."

"You might be an Englishwoman."

"Yes, for the English language has been familiar to me from my childhood."

We were seated on a sofa and on the table in front of us was a chess-board. Pauline toyed with the pawns and I asked if she could play chess.

"Yes, and pretty well, too, from what they tell me."

"Then we will have a game together; my blunders will amuse you."

We began and in four moves I was checkmated. She laughed and I admired her game. We began again and I was checkmated in five moves. My agreeable guest laughed heartily and, while she laughed, I became intoxicated with love, watching the play of her features, her exquisite teeth and her happy expression. We began another game. Pauline played carelessly and I placed her in a difficult position.

"I think you may conquer me," said she.

"What happiness for me!"

The servant came in to tell us that dinner was ready.

"Interruptions are often extremely inconvenient," said I, as I offered her my arm, feeling quite sure that she had not lost the significance of my last words, for women find a meaning for everything.

We were just sitting down to table when Clairmont announced my daughter and Madame Rancour.

"Tell them I am at dinner and shall not be disengaged till three o'clock."

Just as my man was leaving the room to carry back my answer, Sophie rushed in and knelt before me, choking with sobs.

This was too much for me and, raising her, I took her on my knees,

saying I knew what she had come for and that for love of her I would do it. Passing from grief to joy, the dear child kissed me, calling me her father and at last making me weep myself.

"Dine with us, dear Sophie," said I. "I shall be the more likely to do what you wish."

She ran from my arms to embrace Pauline, who was weeping out of sympathy, and we all dined happily together. Sophie begged me to give Madame Rancour some dinner.

"I shall do so if you please, but only for your sake, for that Rancour woman deserves that I should leave her standing at the door to punish her for her impertinence to me when I came to London."

The child amused us in an astonishing way all dinner-time, Pauline keeping her ears open and not saying a word, so surprised was she to hear a child of her age talk in a way that would have excited attention in a woman of twenty. Although perfectly respectful, she condemned her mother's conduct and said she was unfortunate in being obliged to give her blind obedience.

"I would wager that you don't love her much."

"I respect her, but I cannot love her, for I am always afraid. I never see her without fearing her."

"Why do you weep, then, at her fate?"

"I pity her, and her family still more, and the expressions she used in sending me to you were very affecting."

"What were these expressions?"

"Go," said she, "kneel before him, for you and you alone can soften his heart."

"Then you knelt before me because your mother told you to do so."

"Yes, for, if I had followed my own inclinations, I should have rushed to your arms."

"You answer well. But are you sure of persuading me?"

"No, for one can never be sure of anything, but I have good hopes of success, remembering what you told me at The Hague. My mother told me I was only three then, but I know I was five. She it was who told me not to look at you when I spoke to you, but fortunately you made her remove her prohibition. Everybody says that you are my father and at The Hague she told me so herself, but here she is always dinning it into my ears that I am the daughter of M. de Montpernis."

"But, Sophie dear, your mother does wrong in making you a bastard when you are the legitimate daughter of the dancer Pompeati, who killed himself at Vienna."

"Then I am not your daughter?"

"Clearly, for you cannot have two fathers, can you?"

"But how is it that I am your image?"

"It's a mere chance."

"You deprive me of a dream which has made me happy"

Pauline said nothing, but covered her with kisses, which Sophie returned effusively. She asked me if the lady was my wife and, on my

replying in the affirmative, she called Pauline her "dear mamma," which made "dear mamma" laugh merrily.

When the dessert was served, I drew four fifty-pound notes out of my pocketbook and, giving them to Sophie, I told her she might hand them over to her mother if she liked, but that the present was for her and not for her mother.

"If you give her the money," I said, "she will be able to sleep to-night in the fine house where she gave me such a poor reception."

"It makes me unhappy to think of that, but you must forgive her."

"Yes, Sophie, but out of love for you."

"Write to her to the effect that it is to me you give the money, not to her; I dare not tell her so myself."

"I could not do that, my dear; it would be insulting her in her affliction. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, quite well."

"You may tell her that, whenever she sends you to dine or sup with me, she will please me very much."

"But you can write that down without wounding her, can you not? Do so, I entreat you. Dear mamma," said she, addressing Pauline, "ask papa to do so and then I will come and dine with you sometimes."

Pauline laughed with all her heart as she addressed me as "husband," and begged me to write the desired epistle. The effect on the mother could only be to show her how much I loved her daughter, and would thus increase her love for her child. I gave in, saying that I could not refuse anything to the adorable woman who had honoured me with the name of "husband." Sophie kissed us and went away in a happy mood.

"It's a long time since I have laughed so much," said Pauline, "and I don't think I have ever had such an agreeable meal. That child is a perfect treasure. She is unhappy, poor little girl, but she would not be so if I were her mother."

I then told her of the true relationship between Sophie and myself and the reasons I had for despising her mother.

"I wonder what she will say when Sophie tells her that she found you at table with your wife."

"She won't believe it, as she knows my horror for the sacrament of matrimony."

"How is that?"

"I hate it because it is the grave of love."

"Not always."

As she said this, Pauline sighed and, lowering her eyes, changed the conversation. She asked me how long I intended to stay in London and, when I replied, "Nine or ten months," I felt myself entitled to ask her the same question.

"I really can't say," she answered. "My return to my country depends on my getting a letter."

"May I ask you what country you come from?"

"I see I shall soon have no secrets from you, but let me have a little

time. I have only begun to know you to-day and in a manner which makes me have a very high opinion of you."

"I shall try my best to deserve the good opinion you have conceived of my character."

"You have shown yourself to me in a thoroughly estimable light."

"Give me your esteem, I desire it earnestly, but don't mention respect, for that seems to shut out friendship; I aspire to yours and I warn you that I shall do my best to gain it."

"I have no doubt you are very clever in that way, but you are generous, too, and I hope you will spare me. If the friendship between us became too ardent, a parting would be dreadful and we may be parted at any moment, indeed, I ought to be looking forward to it."

Our dialogue was getting rather sentimental and, with that ease which is acquired only in the best society, Pauline turned it to other topics and soon asked me to allow her to go upstairs. I would have gladly spent the whole day with her, for I have never met a woman whose manners were so distinguished and at the same time so pleasant.

When she left me, I felt a sort of void and went to see Madame Binetti, who asked me for news of Pembroke. She was in a rage with him.

"He is a detestable fellow," said she. "He would like to have a fresh wife every day! What do you think of such conduct?"

"I envy him his happiness."

"He enjoys it because all women are such fools. He caught me through meeting me at your house; he would never have done so otherwise. What are you laughing at?"

"Because, if he caught you, you also caught him; you are therefore quits."

"You don't know what you are talking about."

I got home at eight o'clock and, as soon as Fanny had told Pauline that I had returned, she came downstairs. I fancied she was trying to captivate me by her attentions and, as the prospect was quite agreeable to me, I thought we would come to an understanding before very long.

Supper was brought in and we stayed at table till midnight, talking about trifles but so pleasantly that the time passed very quickly. When she left me, she wished me good night and said my conversation had made her forget her sorrows.

Pembroke came next morning to ask me to invite him to breakfast and to congratulate me on the disappearance of the sign from my window.

"I should very much like to see your boarder," said he.

"I daresay, my lord, but I can't gratify your curiosity just now, for the lady likes to be alone and puts up with my company only because she can't help it."

He did not insist and, to turn the conversation, I told him that Madame Binetti was furious with him for his inconstancy, which was

a testimonial to his merits. That made him laugh and, without giving me any answer, he asked if I was dining at home that day.

"No, my lord, not to-day."

"I understand. Well, it's very natural; bring the affair to a happy conclusion."

"I will do my best."

Martinelli had found two or three parodies of my notice in the *Advertiser* and came and read them to me. I was much amused with them, they were mostly indecent, for the liberty of the press is much abused in London. As for Martinelli, he was too discreet and refined a man to ask me about my new boarder. As it was Sunday, I begged him to take me to mass at the Bavarian ambassador's chapel, and here I must confess that I was not moved by any feelings of devotion but by the hope of seeing Pauline. I had my trouble for nothing, for, as I heard afterwards, she sat in a dark corner where no one could see her. The chapel was full and Martinelli pointed out several lords and ladies who were Catholics and did not conceal their religion.

When I got home, I received a note from Madame Cornelis, saying that, as it was Sunday and she could go out freely, she hoped I would let her come to dinner. I showed the letter to Pauline, not knowing whether she would object to dining with her, and she said she would be happy to do so, provided there were no men. I wrote in answer to Madame Cornelis that I should be glad to see her and her charming daughter at dinner. They came and Sophie did not leave my side for a moment. Madame Cornelis, who was constrained in Pauline's presence, took me aside to express her gratitude and to communicate to me some chimerical schemes of hers which were soon to make her rich.

Sophie was the life and soul of the party but, as I happened to tell her mother that Pauline was a lady who was lodging in my house, she said, "Then she is not your wife?"

"No; such good fortune is not for me. That was a joke of mine, and the lady amused herself over your credulity."

"Well, I should like to sleep with her."

"Really? When?"

"Whenever mamma will let me."

"We must first ascertain," said the mother, "what the lady thinks of the arrangement."

"The child needn't fear a refusal," said Pauline, giving Sophie a kiss.

"Then you shall have her with pleasure, madame. I will send her governess to fetch her away to-morrow."

"At three o'clock," said I, "for she must dine with us."

Sophie, taking her mother's silence for consent, went up to her and kissed her, but these attentions were but coldly received. She unfortunately did not know how to inspire love.

After Madame Cornelis had gone, I asked Pauline if she would like to take a walk with Sophie and myself in the suburbs, where nobody would know her.

"In prudence," said she, "I cannot go out unless I am alone."

"Then shall we stay here?"

"We could not do better."

Pauline and Sophie sang Italian, French and English duets and the concert of their voices seemed to me ravishing. We supped gaily and at midnight I escorted them to the third floor, telling Sophie I would come and breakfast with her in the morning but that I should expect to find her in bed. I wanted to see if her body was as beautiful as her face. I would gladly have asked Pauline to grant me the same favour, but I did not think things had advanced far enough for that. In the morning I found Pauline up and dressed.

When Sophie saw me, she laughed and hid her head under the sheets but, as soon as she felt me near her, she let me see her pretty little face, which I covered with kisses.

When she had got up, we breakfasted together and the time went by as pleasantly as possible till Madame Rancour came for her little charge, who went away with a sad heart. Thus I was left alone with my Pauline, who began to inspire me with such ardent desires that I dreaded an explosion every moment. And yet I had not so much as kissed her hand.

When Sophie had gone, I made her sit beside me and, taking her hand, I kissed it rapturously, saying, "Are you married, Pauline?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what it is to be a mother?"

"No, but I can partly imagine what happiness it must be."

"Are you separated from your husband?"

"Yes, by circumstances and against our will. We were separated before we had cohabited together."

"Is he in London?"

"No, he is far away; but let us not discuss it any further."

"Only tell me whether my loss will be his gain."

"Yes, and I promise not to leave you till I leave England—that is, unless you send me away—and I shall leave this happy island only to go and be happy with the husband of my choice."

"But I, dear Pauline, will be left unhappy, for I love you with all my heart and am afraid to give you any proof of my love."

"Be generous and spare me, for I am not my own mistress and have no right to give myself to you; and perhaps I would not have the strength to resist if you did not show consideration for me."

"I will obey but I shall still languish. I cannot be unhappy unless I am so unfortunate as to incur your displeasure."

"I have obligations to fulfill, my dear friend, and I cannot neglect them without becoming contemptible in my own eyes and yours, too."

"I should deem myself the most miserable of men if I despised a woman for making me happy."

"Well, I like you too well to think you capable of such conduct, but let us be moderate, for we may have to part to-morrow. You must confess that, if we yielded to desire, this parting would be all the more

bitter. If you are of another opinion, that only shows that your ideas of love and mine are different."

"Then tell me what sort of love is that with which I am so fortunate as to have inspired you?"

"It is of such a kind that enjoyment could only increase it and yet enjoyment seems to me a mere accessory."

"Then what is its essence?"

"To live together in perfect unity."

"That's a blessing we enjoy from morning to eve, but why should we not add the harmless accessory which would take so short a time and give us such peace and tranquillity. You must confess, Pauline, that the principal maintains its happy condition through the nourishment furnished by the accessory."

"Yes, but in your turn you will agree that the food more often than not proves deadly."

"No, not when one loves truly, as I do. Do you think you will love me less when I shall have been yours in all the ardour of true love?"

"No, it's because I think quite otherwise that I dread to make the moment of parting so bitter."

"I see I must yield to your irresistible dialectics, charming Pauline. I should like to see the food on which you feed your heavenly mind, that is, your books. Will you let me come upstairs?"

"Certainly, but you will be fooled."

"How?"

"Come and see."

We went to her room and I found that all her books were Portuguese, with the exception of Milton in English, Ariosto in Italian and La Bruyère's *Characters* in French.

"Your selection gives me a high idea of your mental qualities," said I, "but tell me, why do you give such a preference to Camoëns and all these Portuguese authors?"

"For a very good reason—I am Portuguese myself."

"You Portuguese? I thought you were Italian. And so you already know five languages, for you doubtless know Spanish."

"Yes, although Spanish is not absolutely necessary."

"What an education you have had!"

"I am twenty-two now, but I knew all these languages at eighteen."

"Tell me who you are, tell me all about yourself. I am worthy of your confidence."

"I think so, too, and, to give you a proof of my trust in you, I am going to tell you my history, for, since you love me, you can only wish to do me good."

"What are all these manuscripts?"

"My history, which I have written down myself. Let us sit down."

"I AM the only daughter of the unfortunate Count X—, whom Carvalho Oeiras put to death in prison on suspicion of being concerned in the attempt on the King's life, in which the Jesuits were supposed to have had a hand. I do not know whether my father was innocent or guilty, but I do know that the tyrannical minister did not dare to have him tried or to confiscate his estates, which remain in my possession, though I can enjoy them only by returning to my native land.

"My mother had me brought up in a convent where her sister was abbess. I had all kinds of masters, especially an Italian from Leghorn, who in six years taught me all that he thought proper for me to know. He would answer any question I chose to put to him, save on religious matters, but I must confess that his reserve made me all the fonder of him, for, in leaving me to reflect on certain subjects by myself, he did a great deal to form my judgment.

"I was eighteen when my grandfather removed me from the convent, although I protested that I would gladly stay there till I got married. I was fondly attached to my aunt, who did all in her power after my mother's death to make me forget the double loss I had sustained. My leaving the convent altered the whole course of my existence and, as it was not a voluntary action, I have nothing to repent of.

"My grandfather placed me with his sister-in-law, the Marchioness X—, who gave me half her house. I had a governess, a companion, maids, pages and footmen, all of whom, though in my service, were under the orders of my governess, a well born lady who was fortunately honest and trustworthy.

"A year after I had left the convent, my father came and told me in the presence of my governess that Count Fl— had asked my hand for his son, who was coming from Madrid and would arrive that day.

"What answer did you give him, dear grandfather?"

"That the marriage would be acceptable to the whole of the nobility and also to the King and the royal family."

"But are you quite sure that the young count will like me and that I shall like him?"

"That, my dear daughter, is a matter of course and there need be no discussion on the subject."

"But it is a question in which I am strongly interested, and I should like to consider it very carefully. We shall see how matters arrange themselves."

"You can see each other before deciding, but you must decide all the same."

"I hope so, but let us not be too hasty. We shall see."

"As soon as my grandfather had gone, I told my governess that I had made up my mind never to give my hand save where I had given my heart, and that I would marry only a man whose character and tastes I had carefully studied. My governess gave me no answer and, on my pressing her to give me her opinion, she replied that she thought

her best course would be to keep silence on such a delicate question. This was as much as to tell me that she thought I was right; at least, I persuaded myself that it was so.

"The next day I went to the convent and told the story to my aunt, the abbess, who listened to me kindly and said it was to be hoped that I would fall in love with him and he with me, but that, even if it were otherwise, she was of the opinion that the marriage would take place, as she had reasons for believing that the scheme came from the Princess of Brazil, who favoured Count Fl—.

"Though this information grieved me, I was still glad to know it and my resolution never to marry save for love was all the more strongly confirmed.

"In the course of a fortnight the count arrived and my grandfather presented him to me, several ladies being in the company. Nothing was said about marrying, but there was a deal of talk about the strange lands and peoples the new arrival had seen. I listened with the greatest attention, not opening my mouth the whole time. I had very little knowledge of the world, so I could not make any comparisons between my suitor and other men, but my conclusion was that he could never hope to please any woman and that I would certainly never be his. He had an unpleasant sneering manner, joked in bad taste, was stupid and a devotee, or rather a fanatic. Furthermore he was ugly and ill-shapen and so great a cad that he was not ashamed to relate the story of his conquests in France and Italy.

"I went home hoping with all my heart that he had taken a dislike to me, and a week which passed away without my hearing anything on the subject confirmed me in this belief, but I was doomed to be disappointed. My great-aunt asked me to dinner and, when I went, I found the foolish young man and his father present, together with my grandfather, who formally introduced him to me as my future husband and begged me to fix the wedding day. I made up mind that I would rather die than marry him, and answered politely but coldly that I would name the day when I had decided on marrying, but would require time to think it over. The dinner went off silently and I opened my mouth only to utter monosyllables in reply to questions which I could not avoid. After the coffee had been served, I left the house, taking no notice of anyone except my aunt and my grandfather.

"Some time elapsed and I again began to hope that I had effectually disgusted my suitor, but one morning my governess told me that Father Freire was waiting to speak to me in the ante-chamber. I ordered him to be sent in. He was the confessor of the Princess of Brazil and after some desultory conversation he said the princess had sent him to congratulate me on my approaching marriage with Count Fl—.

"I did not evince any surprise, merely replying that I was appreciative of Her Highness's kindness, but that nothing had been decided so far, as I was not thinking of getting married.

"The priest, who was a perfect courtier, smiled in a manner half kindly, half sardonic, and said that I was at that happy age when I had

no need to think of anything, as my kind friends and relations did all my thinking for me.

"I only answered by an incredulous smile, which, for all his monastic subtlety, struck him as the expression of a young girl's coyness

"Foreseeing the persecution to which I should be subjected, I went the next day to my aunt, the abbess, who could not refuse me her advice. I began by stating my firm resolve to die rather than wed a being I detested.

"The worthy nun replied that the count had been introduced to her and that, to tell the truth, she thought him insufferable; all the same, she said she was afraid I should be made to marry him.

"These words were such a shock to me that I turned the conversation and spoke of other subjects for the remainder of my visit. But, when I got back to my house, I pursued an extraordinary course. I shut myself up in my closet and wrote a letter to the executioner of my unhappy father, the pitiless Oeiras, telling him the whole story and imploring him to protect me and to speak to the King in my favour. 'For,' said I, 'as you have made me an orphan, it is your duty before God to care for me.' I begged him to shelter me from the anger of the Princess of Brazil and to leave me at liberty to dispose of my hand according to my pleasure.

"Though I did not imagine Oeiras to be a humane man, yet I thought he must have some sort of heart; besides, by this extraordinary step and the firmness of my language, I hoped to appeal to his pride and interest him in my favour. I felt sure he would do me justice, if only to prove that he had not been unjust to my father. I was right, as will be seen, and, although I was but an inexperienced girl, my instinct served me well.

"Two days elapsed before I was waited on by a messenger from Oeiras, who begged the honour of a private interview with me. The messenger told me that the minister wished me to reply to all who pressed me to marry that I would not decide until I was assured that the princess desired the match. The minister begged me to excuse his not answering by letter, but he had good reasons for not doing so. The messenger assured me that I could count on his master's support.

"His message delivered, the gentleman took leave with a profound bow and went back without waiting for an answer. I must confess that this young man's looks had made a great impression on me. I cannot describe my feelings, but they exerted a great influence on my conduct and will no doubt continue to do so for the rest of my life.

"This message put me quite at ease, for he would never have given me the instructions he did without being perfectly sure that the princess would not interfere any farther with my marriage; and so I gave myself up entirely to the new sentiments which possessed my heart. Though strong, the flame would no doubt soon have died down if it had not received fresh fuel every day, for, when I saw the young messenger a week later in church, I scarcely recognised him. From that moment, however, I met him everywhere—out walking, in the theatre, in the

houses where I called, and especially when I was getting in or out of my carriage, he was ever beside me, ready to offer his hand; and I got so used to his presence that, when I missed his face, I felt a void in my heart that made me unhappy.

"Almost every day I saw the two Counts Fl— at my great-aunt's, but, as there was no longer any engagement between us, their presence neither joyed me nor grieved me. I had forgiven them but I was not happy. The image of the young messenger, of whom I knew nothing, was ever before me and I blushed at my thoughts, though I would not ask myself the reasons.

"Such was my state of mind when one day I heard a voice which was unknown to me in my maid's room. I saw a quantity of lace on a table and proceeded to examine it without paying any attention to a girl who was standing near the table and curtsying to me. I did not like any of the lace, so the girl said she would bring me some more to choose from the next day and, as I raised my eyes, I was astonished to see that she had the face of the young man who was always in my thoughts. My only resource was to doubt their identity and make myself believe that I had been deceived by a mere chance likeness. I was reassured on second thoughts; the girl seemed to me to be taller than the young man, whom I hesitated to believe capable of such a piece of daring. The girl gathered up her lace and went her way without raising her eyes to mine and this made me feel suspicious again.

"‘Do you know that girl?’ I said coldly to my maid and she replied that she had never seen her before. I went away without another word, not knowing what to believe.

"I thought it over and resolved to examine the girl when she came on the following day, and to unmask her if my suspicions proved to be well founded. I told myself that she might be the young man's sister and that, if it were otherwise, it would be all the more easy to cure myself of my passion. A young girl who reasons on love falls into love, especially if she have no one in whom to confide.

"The pretended lace-seller duly came the next day with a box of lace. I told her to come into my room and then, speaking to her to force her to raise her eyes, I saw before me the being who exerted such a powerful influence over me. It was such a shock that I had no strength to ask him any of the questions I had premeditated. Besides, my maid was in the room and the fear of exposing myself operated, I think, almost as strongly as emotion. I set about choosing some pieces of lace in a mechanical way and told my maid to go and fetch my purse. No sooner had she left the room than the lace-seller fell at my feet and exclaimed passionately, ‘Give me life or death, madame, for I see you know who I am.’

"‘Yes, I know you and I think you must have gone mad.’

"‘Yes, that may be; but I am mad with love. I adore you.’

"‘Rise, for my maid will come back directly.’

"‘She is in my secret.’

"‘What! you have dared——’

"He got up and the maid came in and gave him his money with the utmost coolness. He picked up his lace, made me a profound bow and departed.

"It would have been natural for me to speak to my maid and still more natural if I had dismissed her on the spot. I had no courage to do so and my weakness will astonish only those rigorous moralists who know nothing of a young girl's heart and do not consider my painful position, passionately in love and with no one but myself to rely on.

"I did not follow at once the severe dictates of duty; afterwards it was too late and I easily consoled myself with the thought that I could pretend not to be aware that the maid was in the secret. I determined to dissemble, hoping I should never see the adventurous lover again and thus all would be as if it had never happened.

"This resolve was really the effect of a first impulse of vexation, for a fortnight passed by without my seeing the young man in the theatre, on the promenade or in any of the public places he used to frequent, and I became sad and dreamy, feeling all the time ashamed of my own wanton fancies. I longed to know his name, which I could learn only from my maid, as it was out of the question for me to ask Oeiras. I hated my maid and blushed when I saw her, imagining that she knew that I knew what she had done. I was afraid she would suspect my honour and finally I feared lest she think I loved this young man, and this suspicion seemed to me so compromising that the thought nearly drove me mad. As for the young adventurer, I thought him more to be pitied than blamed, for I did not believe that he knew I loved him and it seemed to me that the idea that I must despise him was enough vengeance for his audacity. But I thought so only in those moments when my vanity was stronger than my love; soon despair would avenge itself on pride and I would fancy he had decided to think no more about me and had perhaps already forgotten me.

"Such a state cannot last long, for, if nothing comes to put an end to the storm which tosses the soul to and fro, it ends at last by making an effort of itself to sail into the calm waters of peace.

"One day I put on a lace kerchief I had bought from the false lace-seller and asked my maid, 'What has become of the girl who sold me this kerchief?'

"I asked this question without premeditation; it was, as it were, an inspiration of my good or my evil genius.

"As crafty as I was simple, the woman answered that no doubt she had not dared to come again, fearing that I had found out her disguise.

"'Certainly,' I replied, 'I found it out directly, but I am not a little surprised to learn that you knew this lace-seller was a young man.'

"'I did not think I would offend you, madame; I know him well.'

"'Who is he?'

"'Count d'Al—; you must have recognised him, for you received him in this very apartment about four months ago.'

"'True, and it is even possible that I did recognise him, but why did you tell a lie when I asked you if you knew that girl?'

" 'I lied to spare your feelings, madame, and I was afraid you would be angry that I knew the disguised person.'

" 'You would have honoured me more by supposing the contrary. When you went out and I told him he was mad and you would find him at my feet when you returned, he told me you were in the secret.'

" 'If it be a secret, but it seems to me a harmless joke.'

" 'I would like to think so, too, but nevertheless it seemed of such weight to me that, rather than dismiss you, I decided to say nothing, as if I had known nothing.'

" 'My idea was that you would be amused, but, since you take it seriously, I am sorry that I failed in my strict duty.'

" 'So weak is a woman in love that in this explanation, which should have shown me the servant's fault in all its enormity, I saw only a full justification. In fact, she had given peace to my heart, but my mind was still uneasy. I knew that there was a young Count d'Al—, belonging to a noble family but almost penniless. All he had was the minister's patronage and the prospect of good state employments. The motion that Heaven intended me to remedy the deficiencies in his fortune plunged me into a sweet reverie and at last I found myself deciding that my maid, who put it all down as a prank, had more wit than I. I blamed myself for my scrupulous behaviour, which seemed no better than prudery. My love was stronger than I thought, and this is my best excuse; besides, I had no one to guide or counsel me.'

" 'But after sunshine comes shadow. My soul was like the ebb and flow of the sea, now in the heights and now in the depths. The resolve which the count seemed to have taken, to see me no more, showed him to be a man either of little enterprise or of little love and this supposition humiliated me. 'If,' I said to myself, 'the count is offended with me for calling him a madman, he can have no delicacy and no discretion; he is unworthy of my love.'

" 'I was in this dreadful state of uncertainty when my maid took upon herself to write to the count that he could come and see me under the same disguise. He followed her advice and one fine morning the crafty maid came into my chamber laughing and told me that the lace-seller was in the next room. I was moved exceedingly, but, restraining myself, I began to laugh also, though the affair was no laughing matter for me.'

" 'Shall I show her in?' said the maid.

" 'Are you crazy?'

" 'Shall I send her away?'

" 'No, I will go and speak to her myself.'

" 'That day was a memorable one. My maid left the room now and again and we had plenty of time to disclose our feelings to one another. I frankly confessed that I loved him, but added that it were best I should forget him, as it was not likely that my relatives would consent to our marriage. In his turn he told me that, the minister having resolved to send him to England, he would die of despair unless he carried with him the hope of one day possessing me, for he said he loved me too well to live without me. He begged me to allow him to come and

see me under the same disguise but, though I could not refuse him anything, I reminded him of the dangers involved.

"It is enough for me," he replied, tenderly, "that you be not in danger; my visits will be set down to the account of your maid."

"But I am afraid for you," I replied. "Your disguise is a crime in itself, your reputation would suffer and that would not tend to bring the wish of your heart nearer."

"In spite of my objections, my heart spoke in his favour and he pleaded so well and promised to be so discreet that at last I said I would gladly see him whenever he liked to come.

"Count d'Al— is twenty-two and shorter than I; his waist is slender and in his disguise as a lace-seller it was hard to recognise him, even by his voice, which is very soft. He imitated the gestures and walk of a woman to perfection; he is almost beardless and, with a few unimportant additions, many a woman would be easily resigned to resembling him

"Thus for nearly three months the disguised count came to see me three or four times a week, always in my maid's room and nearly always in her presence. But, even if we had been entirely alone, his fear of my displeasure was too great to allow him to take the slightest liberties. I think now that this mutual restraint added fuel to our flames, for, when we thought of the fast approaching moment of parting, it was with speechless grief, but we made no effort to devise a plan for our future happiness. We flattered ourselves that Heaven would work some miracle in our favour and that the day would never come when we should be parted.

"But one morning the count came earlier than usual and, bursting into tears, told me that the minister had given him a letter for M de Saa, the Portuguese ambassador in London, and another open letter for the captain of a ship which was shortly to sail for England. In this letter the minister ordered the captain to embark Count d'Al—, to take him to London and to treat him with distinction.

"My poor lover was overwhelmed, he was nearly choked with sobs and his brain was all confusion. For his sake, and taking pity on his grief and my love, I conceived the plan of accompanying him as his servant—or rather, in order to avoid disguising my sex, as his wife. When I told him, he was at once stupefied and dazzled. He was beyond reasoning and left everything in my hands. We agreed to discuss the matter at greater length on the following day and we parted

"Foreseeing that it would be difficult for me to leave the house in woman's dress, I resolved to disguise myself as a man. But, if I kept to my man's dress, I should be obliged to occupy the position of my lover's valet and undertake tasks beyond my strength. This thought made me resolve to impersonate the master myself but, thinking that I should not care to see my lover degraded to the rank of a servant, I determined that he should be my wife, supposing that the captain of the ship did not know him by sight.

"As soon as we get to England," I thought, "we will get married and can resume our respective attire. This marriage will efface whatever

shame may be attached to our flight; they will say, perhaps, that the count carried me off, but a girl is not carried off against her will, and Oeiras surely will not persecute me for having made the fortune of his favourite. As to our means of subsistence, till I get my income, I can sell my diamonds and they will realise an ample sum.'

"The next day, when I told my lover of this strange plan, he made no objections. The only obstacle which he thought of was the circumstance that the sea captain might know him by sight and this would have been fatal; but, as he did not think it likely, we determined to run the risk and it was agreed that he should get me the clothes for the new part I was to play.

"I saw my lover again after an interval of three days; it was night-fall when he came. He told me the Admiralty had informed him that the ship was riding at the mouth of the Tagus and that the captain would put to sea as soon as he had delivered his dispatches and received fresh instructions. Count d'Al— was consequently requested to be at a certain spot at midnight and a boat would be in waiting to take him on board.

"I had made up my mind and this was enough for me; after having fixed the time and place of meeting, I shut myself up, pretending to be ill. I put a few necessaries into a bag, not forgetting the precious jewel-casket, dressed myself up as a man and left the house by a stair used only by the servants. Even the porter did not see me as I made my escape.

"Fearing lest I should go astray, the count was waiting for me a short distance away and I was pleasantly surprised when he took me by the arm, saying, 'Tis I.' From this careful action, simple though it was, I saw he had intelligence; he was afraid to take hold of me without making himself known. We went to a house where he had his trunk and in half an hour his disguise was made. When all was ready, a man came for our slight baggage and we walked to the river where the shallop was waiting for us. It was eleven o'clock when we left land and, thinking my jewels would be safer in his pocket than in my bag, I gave them to him and we anxiously awaited the arrival of the captain. He came aboard with his officers at midnight and accosted me politely, saying he had received orders to treat me with distinction. I thanked him cordially and introduced my wife to him, whom he greeted respectfully, saying he was delighted to have such a charming passenger, who would doubtless give us a fortunate voyage. He was too polite to be astonished that the minister had made no mention of the count's wife in his letter.

"We got to the frigate in less than an hour, she was three leagues from land, and, as soon as we got on board, the captain ordered the men to set sail. He took us to a room which was extremely comfortable, considering it was only a cabin, and, after doing the honours, he left us to ourselves.

"When we were alone, we thanked Heaven that everything had gone off so well and, far from going to sleep, we spent the night in discuss-

ing the bold step we had taken, or rather, just begun to take, however, we hoped it would have as fortunate an ending as beginning. When the day dawned, our hearts gladdened because Lisbon was no longer in sight and, as we were in need of rest, I lay down on a seat, while the count got into a hammock, neither of us troubling to undress.

"We were just falling asleep when we began to feel the approach of seasickness and for three days we knew no peace.

"On the fourth day, scarcely able to stand upright for weakness, we began to be hungry and had to exercise a careful moderation in order not to become seriously ill. Happily for us, the captain had a store of good food and our meals were delicate and well served.

"My lover, whose sickness had been more severe than mine, used this as a pretext for not leaving his room. The captain did not come to see us once, this reserve must have been due to extreme politeness, for in Portugal one may be jealous and yet not ridiculous. As for me, I stood on the deck nearly all day, the fresh air did me good and I amused myself by scanning the horizon with my telescope.

"The seventh day of the voyage my heart trembled as with a presentiment of misfortune when the sailors said that a vessel which could be seen in the distance was a corvette which must have sailed a day after us but, being a swift sailer, would probably reach England two or three days before our frigate.

"Though the voyage from Lisbon to England is a long one, we had fair wind all the way and in fourteen days dropped anchor at daybreak in the port of Plymouth.

"The officer sent ashore by the captain to ask leave to disembark passengers came on board in the evening with several letters. One the captain read with peculiar attention and then called me to one side and said:

" 'This letter comes from Count Oeiras and enjoins me, on my life, not to let any Portuguese young lady land unless she be known to me. I am to take her back to Lisbon after having executed my various commissions. There is neither wife nor maid on my frigate, except the countess your wife. If you can prove that she is really your wife, she may land with you; otherwise, you see, I cannot disobey the minister's orders.'

" 'She is my wife,' I said coolly, 'but, as I could not foresee this accident, I have no papers to prove the fact.'

" 'I am sorry to hear it, as in that case she must go back to Lisbon. You may be sure I will treat her with all possible respect.'

" 'But a wife may not be parted from her husband.'

" 'Quite so, but I cannot disobey orders. If you like, you can return to Lisbon in the corvette; you will get there before us.'

" 'Why cannot I return in this frigate?'

" 'Because I have express orders to put you ashore. And, now I come to think of it, how was it that there was not a word about your wife in the letter you gave me when we started? If the lady is not the

person meant by the minister, you may be sure she will be sent back to join you in London.'

"'You will allow me to go and speak to her?'

"'Certainly, but in my presence.'

"My heart was broken; nevertheless, I had to put a good face on the losing game I was playing. I went to the count and, addressing him as 'my dear wife,' communicated the order which was to part us.

"I was afraid he would betray himself, but he was strong-minded enough to restrain his emotion and only replied that we must needs submit and that we should see each other again in a couple of months.

"As the captain stood beside us, I could utter only commonplaces. I warned him, however, that, directly I got to London, I should write to the abbess who was the first person he must go and see in Lisbon, as she would have my address. I took care not to ask for my jewel-case, as the captain might have thought that my false wife was some rich young lady whom I had seduced.

"We had to abandon ourselves to our destiny. We embraced each other and mingled our tears and the captain wept, too, when he heard me say, 'Trust in all things to the worthy captain and let us not fear at all.'

"The count's trunk was lowered into the boat and, as I did not dare to take my bag, I found myself loaded with nothing but a man's clothes, which would not have fitted me, even if I had intended to keep up my disguise.

"When I came to the custom house, I saw my possessions. There were books, letters, linen, some suits of clothes, a sword and two pairs of pistols, one pair of which I put in my pockets, and then I went to an inn, where the host said that, if I wanted to travel to London the next morning, I would have to pay for only one horse.

"'Who are the people,' said I, 'who desire a companion?'

"'You shall sup with them if you like,' said he.

"I accepted the offer and found the party consisted of a minister of religion and two ladies whose faces pleased me. I was fortunate enough to win their good graces and early the next day we got to London and alighted in the Strand at an inn where I only dined, going out to seek a lodging appropriate to my means and the kind of life I wished to lead. Fifty Lisbon pieces and a ring of about the same value was all that I possessed in the world.

"I took a room on the third floor, being attracted by the honest and kindly expression of the good landlady. I could only trust in God and confide my position to her. I agreed to pay her ten shillings a week and begged her to get me some woman's clothes, for I was afraid to go out in my man's dress any longer.

"The next day I was clothed like a poor girl who desires to escape notice. I spoke English well enough to seem a native of the country and I knew how I must behave if I wished to be let alone. Although the landlady was a worthy woman, her house was not exactly suitable for me; my stay in England might be protracted and, if I came to

destitution, I should be wretched, indeed, so I resolved to leave the house. I received no visitors but could not prevent the inquisitive from hovering round my door and, the more it became known that I saw no one, the more their curiosity increased. The house was not quiet enough. It was near the Exchange and the neighbourhood swarmed with young men who came to dine on the first floor of the house and did their best to cure me of my 'sadness,' as they called it, though I had not shown any signs of wishing to be cured.

"I made up my mind to spend not more than a guinea a week and resolved to sell my ring if I could have the money paid to me at intervals. An old jeweller who lodged next door and whose honesty my landlady guaranteed, told me it was worth a hundred and fifty guineas and asked me to let him have it if I received no better offer. I had not thought it to be so valuable and I sold it to him on condition that he would pay me four guineas a month and that I should be at liberty to buy it back if I could do so before all the payments had been made.

"I wanted to keep my ready money, which I still have by me, so as to be able to go back to Lisbon by land when I could do so in safety, for I could not face the horrors of a sea voyage a second time.

"I told my case to my worthy landlady, who still befriends me, and she helped me to get another lodging, but I had to procure a servant to fetch me my food; I could not summon up courage to have my meals in a coffee-house. However, all my servants turned out ill, they robbed me continually and levied a tax on all their purchases

"The temperance I observed—for I almost lived on bread and water—made me get thinner every day; still I saw no way of mending my existence until chance made me see your singular advertisement. I laughed at it and then, drawn by some irresistible power or perhaps by the curiosity that falls to the lot of most of us women, I could not resist going in and speaking to you. Instinct thus pointed out the way to improve my lot without increasing my expenditure.

"When I got back, I found a copy of the *Advertiser* on my landlady's table; it contained some editorial fun on the notice I had just read. The writer said that the master of the house was an Italian and had therefore nothing to fear from feminine violence. On my side I determined to hazard everything, but I now realise that I have been too sure of myself and that there are certain attacks which it is pleasant not to resist. I was brought up by an Italian, a clever and good man, and I have always had a great respect for your fellow countrymen."

My fair Portuguese had finished her story and I observed, "Really, your story has entertained me very much; it has all the air of a romance."

"Quite so," said she, "but it is a strictly historical romance. But the most amusing thing to me is that you have listened to it without weariness."

"That is your modesty, madame; not only has your tale interested

me but, now that I know you are a Portuguese, I am at peace with the nation."

"Were you at war with us, then?"

"I have never forgiven you for letting your Portuguese Virgil die miserably two hundred years ago."

"You mean Camoëns. But the Greeks treated Homer in the same way."

"Yes, but the faults of others are no excuse for our own."

"You are right; but how can you like Camoëns so much if you do not know Portuguese?"

"I have read a translation in Latin hexameters so well done that I fancied I was reading Virgil."

"Is that truly so?"

"I would never lie to you."

"Then I make a vow to learn Latin."

"That is worthy of you, but it is of me that you must learn the language. I will go to Portugal and live and die there, if you will give me your heart."

"My heart! I have only one and that is given already. Since I have known you, I have despised myself, for I am afraid I have an inconstant nature."

"It will be enough for me if you will love me as your father, provided I may sometimes take my daughter in my arms. But go on with your story; the chief part is yet untold. What became of your lover and what did your relatives do when they found out your flight?"

"Three days after I arrived in this vast city, I wrote to the abbess, my aunt, and told her the whole story, begging her to protect my lover and to confirm me in my resolution never to return to Lisbon till I could do so in security and have no obstacles placed in the way of my marriage. I also begged her to write and inform me of all that happened, addressing her letters to Miss Pauline, under cover of my landlady."

"I sent my letter by Paris and Madrid and I had to wait three months before I got an answer. My aunt told me the frigate had returned only a short time before and that the captain immediately on his arrival wrote to the minister, informing him that the only lady in his ship when he sailed was still on board, for he had brought her back with him, despite the opposition of Count d'Al—, who declared she was his wife. The captain ended by asking his excellency for further orders with respect to the lady aforesaid."

"Oeiras, feeling sure that the lady was myself, told the captain to take her to the convent of which my aunt was abbess, with a letter he had written. In this letter he told my aunt that he sent her her niece and begged her to keep the girl securely till further orders. My aunt was extremely surprised, but she would have been still more surprised if she had not got my letter a few days before. She thanked the captain for his care and took the false niece to a room and locked her up. She then wrote to Oeiras, telling him that she had received into

her increase daily and every day inspiring her with tenderer feelings towards myself. But, as my love increased in strength, I grew thin and feeble, I could not sleep or eat. I should have languished away if I had not succeeded in gratifying my passion. On the other hand, Pauline grew plumper and prettier every day.

"If my sufferings serve to increase your charms," said I, "you ought not to let me die, for a dead man has no suffering"

"Do you think your sufferings are due to your love for me?"

"Certainly."

"There may be something in that but, believe me, the tender passion does not destroy the appetite or take away the power of sleep. Your indisposition is undoubtedly due to the sedentary life you have been leading of late. If you love me, give me a proof of it; go out for a ride."

"I cannot refuse you anything, dearest Pauline, but what then?"

"Then you shall find me grateful to you, you will have a good appetite and will sleep well."

"A horse, a horse! Quick! My boots!" I kissed her hand—for I had not got any further than that—and set out to ride towards Kingston. I did not care for the motion of trotting, so I put my horse at a gallop, when all of a sudden he stumbled and in an instant I was lying on the ground in front of the Duke of Kingston's house. Miss Chudleigh happened to be at the window and, seeing me thrown to the ground, uttered a shriek. I raised my head and she recognised me and hastened to send some of her people to help me. As soon as I was on my feet, I wanted to go and thank her, but I could not stir. They carried me into a low-ceilinged hall and removed my boots, a valet who knew something of surgery examined me and declared that I had put out my collarbone and would require a week's rest.

The young lady told me that, if I wished to stay in her house, the greatest care would be taken of me. I thanked her warmly but begged her to have me taken home, as I did not wish to give her so much trouble. She immediately gave the necessary orders and I was driven home in a comfortable carriage. The servants in charge would not accept any money and I saw in the incident a proof of that hospitality for which the English are famed, although they are at the same time profoundly egotistic.

When I got home, I went to bed and sent for a surgeon, who laughed when I told him that I had dislocated a bone.

"I'll wager it is nothing more than a sprain. I only wish it was dislocated, so that I might have some chance of showing my skill."

"I am delighted," I said, "not to be in a position to call for that amount of talent, but I shall have a high opinion of you if you set me up in a short time."

I did not see Pauline, much to my astonishment. I was told she had gone out in a sedan-chair and I almost felt jealous. In two hours she came in looking quite frightened, the old housekeeper having told her that I had broken my leg and that the doctor had been with me already.

"Unhappy wretch that I am!" she exclaimed, as she came to my bedside. "'Tis I that have brought you to this"

With these words, she turned pale and almost fell in a swoon beside me.

"Divine being!" I cried, as I pressed her to my breast, "it is nothing; only a sprain."

"What grief that foolish old woman caused me! God be praised that it is no worse! Feel my heart."

"Oh, yes! I feel it with delight. It was a lucky fall for me"

Fastening my lips on hers, I felt with delight that our transports were mutual, and I blessed the sprain that had brought me such bliss.

After this outburst of our first real happiness, I remarked that Pauline was laughing.

"What are you laughing at, sweetheart?"

"At the craft of love, which always triumphs at last."

"Where have you been?"

"I went to my old jeweller's to redeem my ring, that you might have a souvenir of me, here it is."

"Pauline! Pauline! A little love would have been much more precious to me than this beautiful ring."

"You shall have both. Till the time of my departure, which will come only too soon, we will live together as man and wife; and we will celebrate our wedding with a supper here on your bed, which both I and your sprain, dearest, forbid you to quit"

"What sweet news you give me, Pauline! I could not endure to wait if I thought it was a certainty. Allow me to doubt of it until I taste the reality."

"You may doubt if you like, but let it be a slight doubt or you will do me wrong. I am tired of living with you and making you wretched, though loving you, the moment I saw you on horseback, I determined to belong to you. Consequently I went to redeem the ring directly you left, and I do not intend to leave you until I receive the fatal message from Lisbon. I have dreaded its arrival every day for the last week."

"May the messenger that brings it be robbed on the way!"

"No such luck, I am afraid."

As Pauline was standing, I asked her to come to my arms, for I longed to give her some palpable signs of my love.

"No, dearest, one can love and yet be wise, the door is open"

She got down Ariosto and began to read to me the adventure of Ricciardetto with Fiordesquina, an episode which gives the beauty to the twenty-ninth canto of that beautiful poem, which I knew by heart. She imagined that she was the princess and I Ricciardetto. She liked to fancy

*Che il ciel l'abbia concesso,
Bradamante cangiata in miglior sesso.*

When she came to the lines:

*Le belle braccia al collo indi mi getta,
E dolcemente stringe, e baccia in bocca:
Tu puoi pensar se allora la saetta
Dirizza Amor, se in mezzo al cor mi tocca . . .*

she wanted to make some comments on the expression *baccia in bocca*. She burst out laughing when she came to the lines:

*Io il veggo, io il sento, e a pena vero parmi:
Sento in maschio la femina mutarsi.*

And then:

*Così le dissi, e feci ch'ella stessa
Trovo con man la veritate espressa.*

She expressed her wonder that this poem, abounding in obscenities, had not been put on the Index at Rome.

"What you call obscenity is mere licence and there is plenty of that at Rome."

"That's a pun which should bring the censures of the Church upon you. But what do you call obscenities if Ariosto is not obscene?"

"Obscenity disgusts and never gives pleasure."

"Your logic is all your own but, situated as I am, I cannot confute your proposition. I am amused at Ariosto's choosing a Spanish woman above all others to conceive that strange passion for Bradamante."

"The heat of the Spanish climate made him conclude that the Spanish temperament was likewise ardent and consequently whimsical in its tastes."

"Poets are a kind of madmen who allow themselves to give utterance to all their fancies."

The reading was continued and I thought my time had come when she read the verses:

*Io senza scale in su la rocca salto,
E lo stendardo piantovi di botto,
E la nemica mia mi caccio sotto.*

I wanted to give her a practical illustration of the lines, but with that tenderness so natural to women and which they can use so well as a goad to passion, she said, "Dearest, you might make yourself worse; let us wait till your sprain is cured."

"Are we to wait till I am cured for the consummation of our marriage?"

"I suppose so, for, if I am not mistaken, any movement would be harmful to you."

"You are wrong, dear Pauline, but it would make no difference to me even if it were so. You may be sure I will not put it off till tomorrow, even if it were sure to cost me a leg."

"Very well; since it is written that a wife should obey her husband, you will find me docile."

"When?"

"After supper."

"Then we will have no supper. We shall dine with all the better appetite to-morrow. Let us begin now."

"No, for the suspicions of the servants might be aroused. Love has its rules of decency, like everything else"

"You talk as wisely as Cato and I am obliged to confess that you are right in all you say."

Supper was served as usual; it was delicate enough, but the thought of approaching bliss had taken away our appetites and we ate only for form's sake. At ten o'clock we were at liberty and could indulge our love without fear of being disturbed.

But this delightful woman, who had so plainly told me a few hours before that, when I was cured, we would live together as man and wife, was now ashamed to undress before me. She could not make up her mind and told me so, laughing at herself. From this circumstance I gathered that the modesty of the body is more tenacious in its grasp than the modesty of the mind.

"But, sweetheart," said I, "you lived a fortnight in the same cabin with your betrothed!"

"Yes, but he always lay in his hammock with his back towards me when I undressed, and in the morning he never turned round to wish me good day till he knew I was dressed."

"What, he never . . . !"

"I never let him take any liberties."

"Such virtue is incomprehensible to me"

"Consider that the count is to be my husband for all time and I am to be his wife; in such cases a young woman is careful. Besides, I believe that, if one will but refrain from taking the first step, continence is easy. Moreover, the count was naturally timid and would have feared to take any liberties without my encouraging him, which I took care not to do. For this once, you will allow me to lie down alongside you with all my clothes on."

"Certainly, if you wish me to dress also; otherwise it would be unbearable for both of us."

"You are very cruel"

"But, dearest, are you not ashamed of these foolish scruples?"

"Well, put out the candles and in a minute I will be beside you."

My charming Portuguese did not reflect that the moon shone full into the room and that the muslin bed-curtains would not prevent my seeing her exquisite figure, which showed to greater advantage in the position she happened to take. If Pauline had been a coquette, I should have considered her scruples as mere artifice calculated to increase my ardour, but she had no need to use such stratagems. At last she was in my arms and we clasped each other closely in a silence broken only by the murmur of our kisses.

Till this moment love alone had swayed me but, now that the sacrifice was over, I felt full of respect and gratitude. I told her effusively

that I knew how great was my happiness and I was ready to sacrifice my life to her to prove my love

The thought that our embraces would have no dangerous result had put Pauline at her ease and she gave rein to her ardent temperament, till at last we abandoned ourselves to a profound and peaceful sleep. I was the first to awake, the sun was shining in through the window and I gazed on Pauline. As I looked at this woman, the leading beauty of Portugal, the only child of an illustrious family, who had given herself to me all for love and whom I should possess for so short a time, I could not restrain a profound sigh.

Pauline awoke and her gaze, as bright as the rising sun in spring-time, fixed itself on me trustfully and lovingly.

"What are you thinking of, dearest?"

"I am trying to convince myself that my happiness is not a dream and, if it be real, I want it to last forever. I am the happy mortal to whom you have surrendered your great treasure, of which I am unworthy, though I love you tenderly."

"Sweetheart, you are worthy of all my devotion and affection if you still respect me."

"Can you doubt it, Pauline?"

"No, dearest, I think you love me and that I shall never repent having trusted in you."

Pauline rose and laughed to find that she was no longer ashamed to stand before me. Then, passing from jest to earnest, she said, "If the loss of shame is the result of knowledge, how was it that our first parents were not ashamed till they had acquired knowledge?"

"I don't know, dearest; but tell me, did you ever ask your learned Italian master that same question?"

"Yes, I did."

"What did he say?"

"That their shame arose not from their enjoyment, but from disobedience and that, in covering the parts which had seduced them, they discovered, as it were, the sin they had committed. Whatever may be said on the subject, I shall always think that Adam was much more to blame than Eve."

"How so?"

"Because Adam received the prohibition from God, while Eve had it only from Adam."

"I thought that both of them received the prohibition directly from God."

"You have not read Genesis then."

"You are laughing at me."

"Then you have read it carelessly, because it is distinctly stated that God made Eve after He had forbidden Adam to eat of the fruit."

"I wonder that point has not been remarked by our commentators; it seems a very important one to me."

"They are a pack of knaves, all sworn enemies of woman."

"No, no; they give proofs of quite another feeling only too often."

"Let us not discuss that any further; but my teacher was an honest man "

"Was he a Jesuit?"

"Yes, but of the short robe."

"What do you mean?"

"We will discuss that question another time."

"Very good, I should like to have it proved to me that a man can be a Jesuit and honest at the same time."

"There are exceptions to all rules "

My Pauline was a profound thinker and strongly attached to her religion. I should never have discovered that she possessed this merit if I had not slept with her. I have known several women of the same stamp; if you wish to know the elevation of their souls, you must begin by damning them. When this is done, one enjoys their confidence, for they have no secrets for the happy victor. This is the reason why the charming though feeble sex loves the brave and despises the cowardly. Sometimes they appear to love cowards but always for their physical beauty. Women amuse themselves with such fellows but are the first to laugh if they get caned.

After the most delicious night I had ever passed, I resolved not to leave my house till Pauline had to return to Portugal. She did not leave me for a moment, save to hear mass on Sundays. I shut my door to everybody, even to the doctor, for my sprain disappeared of itself. I did not fail to inform Miss Chudleigh of my rapid cure; she had sent twice a day ever since the accident to learn how I was.

Pauline went to her room and I did not see her again till dinner-time but, when I did, I thought her an angel. Her face had caught the hues of the lily and the rose and had an air of happiness I could not help admiring.

As we both wanted to have our portraits painted, I asked Martinelli to send me the best miniature-painter in London. He sent me a Jew, who succeeded admirably. I had my miniature mounted in a ring and gave it to Pauline and this was the only present she would accept from me, who would have considered myself rich if she had accepted all I had.

We spent three weeks in a happy dream which no pen can describe. I was quite well again and we tasted all the sweets of love together. All day and all night we were together; our desires were satisfied only to be renewed; we enjoyed the extremest bliss. In a word, it is difficult to form a just idea of the state of two individuals who enjoy all the range of physical and mental pleasures together, whose life is for the present without thought of the future, whose joys are mutual and continual; such, nevertheless, was the position of myself and my divine Pauline.

Every day I discovered in her some fresh perfection which made me love her more; her nature was inexhaustible in its treasures, for her mental qualities even surpassed her physical beauties and an excellent education had wonderfully increased the powers of her intelligence.

With all the beauty, grace and gentleness of a woman, Pauline had also the strength and nobility of character and the breadth of view which distinguish the most happily gifted of men. She was already beginning to flatter herself that the fatal letter would never come and that the count was little more than a dream of the past. Sometimes she would say that she could not understand how a pretty face could exercise such a strong influence over us in spite of our reason.

"I have found out too late," she added, "that only the merest chance can make happy a marriage contracted for purely physical reasons."

The first of August was a fatal day for both of us. Pauline received a letter from Lisbon summoning her home without delay and I a letter from Paris announcing the death of Madame d'Urfé. Madame du Romain told me that, on the evidence of her maid, the doctors had pronounced her death to be due to an overdose of the liquid she called "the Panacea." She added that a will had been found which savoured of a lunatic asylum, for she had left all her wealth to the son or daughter that should be born of her, declaring that she was with child. I was to be the infant's guardian; this vexed me exceedingly, as I knew I would be the laughing-stock of Paris for a week at least. Her daughter, the Comtesse du Châtelet, had taken possession of all her real estate and her portfolio, which contained, to my surprise, four hundred thousand francs. This was a great shock for me, but the contents of the two letters Pauline had received were a greater blow. One was from her aunt, the other from Oeiras, who begged her to return to Lisbon as soon as possible and assured her that she should be put in possession of her property on her arrival and would be at liberty to marry Count d'Al— in the sight of all the world. He sent her a cheque for twenty million reis I was not aware of the small value of the coin and was in ecstasy; but Pauline laughed and said it came to only two thousand pounds, which was a sufficient sum, however, to allow her to travel in the style of a duchess. The minister wanted her to come by sea and all she had to do was to communicate with the Portuguese ambassador, who had orders to give her a passage on a Portuguese frigate which happened to be riding in an English port. Pauline would not hear of the voyage, nor of applying to the ambassador, for she did not want anyone to think she had been forced to return. She was very angry with the minister for having sent her a cheque, thinking he must be aware she had been in need, but I soon brought her to see reason on this point, telling her it was a very thoughtful and delicate proceeding on the part of Oeiras and that he had merely lent her the money and not given it to her.

Pauline was rich and she was a high-minded woman. Her generosity may be estimated by her giving me her ring when she was in want, and she certainly never counted on my purse, though she may have felt confident I would not abandon her. I am sure she believed me to be very rich and my conduct was certainly calculated to favour that idea.

The day and even the night passed sadly. The next day Pauline addressed me as follows:

"We must part, dear friend, and try to forget one another, for my honour obliges me to become the wife of the count as soon as I arrive in Lisbon. That first fancy of my heart, which you have almost effaced, will regain all its old force when I see you no longer, and I am sure I shall love my husband, for he is a good-hearted, honest, pleasant young man, that much I know from the few days we lived together.

"Now, I have a favour to ask of you, which I am sure you will grant. Promise me never to come to Lisbon without my permission. I hope you will not seek to know my reasons, you would not, I am sure, come to trouble my peace, for, if I sinned, I should be unhappy and you would not desire that for me. It seems to me as I had been your wife and, now we are parted, I shall fancy myself a widow about to undertake another marriage."

I burst into tears and, pressing her to my breast, promised I would do as she wished.

Pauline wrote to her aunt and Oeiras that she would be in Lisbon in October and that they would have further news of her when she reached Spain. She had plenty of money and bought a carriage and engaged a maid and these arrangements took up her time during the last week she spent with me. I made her promise me to let Clairmont accompany her as far as Madrid. She was to send me back my faithful servant when she reached the Spanish capital, but fate had decreed I should see his face no more.

The last few days were spent partly in sorrow and partly in delight. We looked at each other without speaking and spoke without knowing what we said. We forgot to eat and went to bed hoping that love and anguish would keep us awake, but our exhausted bodies fell into a heavy sleep and, when we awoke, we could only sigh and kiss again.

Pauline allowed me to escort her as far as Calais and we started on the tenth of August, stopping at Dover only to embark the carriage on the packet, and four hours afterwards we disembarked at Calais and Pauline, considering her widowhood had begun, begged me to sleep in another room. She started on the twelfth of August, preceded by my poor Clairmont and resolved to travel only by daytime.

The analogy between my parting with Pauline and my sorrowful parting with Henriette in Geneva fifteen years before was exceedingly striking; the two women were of very similar character and both were equally beautiful, though their beauty was of a different kind. Perhaps that was why I fell as madly in love with the second as with the first. Both being equally intelligent, the fact that one had more talent and fewer set ideas than the other must have been the result of their different upbringing. Pauline had the fine pride of her nation, her mind was of a serious cast and her religion was more an affair of the heart than of the understanding. She was also a far more ardent mistress than Henriette. I was successful with both of them because I was rich; if I had been a poor man, I should never have known either of them. I have half forgotten them, as everything is forgotten in time, but, when I recall them to my memory, I find that Henriette made the pro-

founder impression on me, no doubt because I was twenty-five when I knew her, while I was thirty-seven in London.

The older I get, the more I feel how old age blunts the edge of our impressionability; and I regret bitterly that I could not discover the secret of remaining young and happy forever. Vain regrets! We must finish as we began, helpless and devoid of sense.

I went back to England the same day and had a troublesome passage. Nevertheless, I did not rest at Dover and, as soon as I got to London, I shut myself up with a truly English attack of the spleen, while I thought of Pauline and strove to forget her. Jarbe put me to bed and in the morning, when he came into my room, he made me shudder with a speech at which I laughed afterwards.

"Sir," said he, "the old woman wants to know whether she is to put up the notice again."

"The old hag! Does she want me to choke her?"

"Good heavens, no, sir! She is very fond of you, seeing you seemed so sad, she thought..."

"Go and tell her never to think such things again and, as for you..."

"I will do as you wish, sir."

"Then leave me alone."

CHAPTER 108

I PASSED a night which seemed like a never-ending nightmare, and I got up sad and savage, feeling as if I could kill a man or gamble with his life on the ace of hearts. It seemed as if the house, which I had hitherto thought so beautiful, was like a millstone about my neck. I went out in my travelling clothes and walked into a coffee-house, where I saw a score of people reading the papers.

I sat down and, not understanding English, passed my time in gazing at the comers and goers. I had been there some time when my attention was attracted by the voice of a man saying in French, "Tommy has committed suicide and he did right, for he was in such a state that he could expect only unhappiness for the rest of his life."

"You are quite mistaken," said the other, with the greatest composure. "I was also one of his creditors and was present at the inventorying of his effects and everyone could see that he had done a stupid schoolboy thing; he could just as well have waited six months before killing himself, living well all that time, despite the involved condition of his affairs"

At any other time this calculation would have made me laugh and, as it was, I felt as if the incident had done me good.

I left the coffee-house without having said a word or spent a penny and went towards the Exchange to get some money. Bosanquet gave me what I wanted directly and, as I walked out with him, I noticed a curious-looking individual, whose name I asked.

"He's worth a hundred thousand," said the banker.

"And who is that other man over there?"

"He's not worth a ten-pound note "

"But I don't want to hear what they are worth, it's their names I want."

"I really don't know."

"How can you tell how much they are worth, not knowing their names?"

"Names don't go for anything here. What we want to know about a man is, how much he has. Besides, what's in a name? Ask me for a thousand pounds and give me a proper receipt and you can do it under the name of Socrates or Attila, for all I care. You will pay me back my money as Socrates or Attila and not as Seingalt; that is all."

"But how about signing bills of exchange?"

"That's another thing, I must use the name which the drawer gives me."

"I don't understand that."

"Well, you see, you are not English nor are you a business man "

On leaving him, I walked towards the park but, wishing to change a twenty-pound note before going home, I went to a stout merchant, an epicure whose acquaintance I had made at the tavern, and put down the note on his counter, begging him to cash it for me.

"Come back in an hour," said he. "I have no money by me just now."

"Very good; I will call again when I come from the park."

"Take back your note; you can give it to me when I hand you the money."

"Never mind; keep it. I don't doubt your honesty."

"Don't be so foolish. If you left me the note, I should certainly decline to hand over the money, if only for the sake of giving you a lesson."

"I don't believe you are capable of such dishonesty."

"Nor am I but, when it comes to such a simple thing as putting a bank-note in your pocket, the most honest man in the world would never dream of having such a thing in his possession without having paid the money for it, and the least slip of memory might lead to a dispute in which you would infallibly come off second best."

"I feel the force of your arguments, especially in a town where so much business is carried on."

When I got into the park, I met Martinelli and thanked him for sending me a copy of the *Decameron*, while he congratulated me on my reappearance in society and on the young lady of whom I had been the happy possessor and, no doubt, the slave.

"My lord Pembroke saw her," said he, "and thought her charming."

"What? Where could he have seen her?"

"In a carriage with you, driving fast along the Rochester Road. That was three or four days ago."

"Then I may tell you that I was taking her to Calais; I shall never see her face again."

"Will you let the room again in the same way?"

"No, never again, though the God of Love has been propitious to me. I shall be glad to see you at my house whenever you like to come."

"Shall I send you a note to warn you?"

"Not at all."

We walked on, talking about literature, manners and so forth in an aimless way. All at once, as we approached Buckingham House, I saw five or six persons relieving nature amidst the bushes, with their hinder parts facing the passers-by. I thought this a disgusting piece of indecency and said as much to Martinelli, adding that the impudent rascals might at least turn their faces towards the path.

"Not at all," he exclaimed, "for then they might be recognised, whereas, in exposing their posteriors, they run no such risk; besides, the sight makes squeamish persons turn away."

"You are right, but you will confess that the whole thing strikes a stranger as revolting."

"Yes, there is nothing so ineradicable as national prejudice. You may have noticed that, when an Englishman wants to ease his sluices in the street, he doesn't run up an alley or turn to the wall, as we do."

"Yes, I have noticed them turning towards the middle of the street but, if they thus escape the notice of the people in the shops and on the pavement, they are seen by everybody who is driving in a carriage and that is as bad."

"The people in the carriages need not look."

"That is true."

We walked on to the Green Park and met Lord Pembroke on horseback. He stopped and burst into exclamations on seeing me. As I guessed the cause of his surprise, I hastened to tell him that I was a free man once more, to my sorrow, and felt lonely amidst my splendour.

"I feel rather curious about it and I may come and keep you company to-day."

We parted and, reckoning on seeing him at dinner, I went back to tell my cook that dinner was to be served in the large room. Martinelli had an engagement and could not come to dinner, but he led me out of the park by a gate with which I was not acquainted, and sent me on my way.

As we were going along, we saw a crowd of people who seemed to be staring at something. Martinelli went up to the crowd and then returned to me, saying, "That's a curious sight for you; you can record it among your notes on English manners."

"What is it?"

"A man at the point of death from a blow he has received in boxing with another sturdy fellow."

"Cannot anything be done?"

"There is a surgeon there who would bleed him if he were allowed."

"Who can prevent him?"

"That's the curious part of it. Two men have bet on his death or recovery. One says, 'I'll bet twenty guineas he dies,' and the other says,

'Done!' Number one will not allow the surgeon to bleed him, for, if the man recovered, his twenty guineas would be gone."

"Poor man! What pitiless bettors!"

"The English are very strange in their betting proclivities; they bet on everything. There is a Betting Club to which I will introduce you if you like."

"Do they speak French there?"

"Most certainly, for it is composed of men of wit and mark."

"What do they do?"

"They talk and argue and, if one man brings forward a proposition which another denies, and one backs his opinion, the other has to bet, too, on pain of a fine which goes to the common fund."

"Introduce me to this delightful club, by all means; it will make my fortune, for I shall always take care to be on the right side."

"You had better be careful; they are wary birds."

"But to return to the dying man, what will be done to his antagonist?"

"His hand will be examined and, if it is found to be just the same as yours or mine, it will be marked and he will be let go."

"I don't understand that, so kindly explain. How do they recognise a dangerous hand?"

"If it is found to be marked already, it is a proof that he has killed his man before and has been marked for it, with the warning, 'Take care not to kill anyone else, for, if you do, you will be hanged.'"

"But supposing such a man is attacked?"

"He should show his hand and then his adversary would let him alone."

"But if not?"

"Then he is defending himself and, if he kills his man, he is acquitted, provided he can bring witnesses to swear that he was forced to fight."

"Since fighting with the fist may cause death, I wonder it is allowed."

"It is allowed only for a wager. If the combatants do not put one or more pieces of money on the ground before the fight and there is a death, the man is hanged."

"What laws! What customs!"

In such ways I learnt much concerning the manners and ways of this proud nation, at once so great and so small.

The noble lord came to dinner and I treated him in a manner to make him wish to come again. Although there were only the two of us, the meal lasted a long time, as I was anxious for additional information on what I had heard in the morning, especially on the Betting Club. The worthy Pembroke advised me not to have anything to do with it, unless I made up my mind to keep perfect silence for four or five weeks.

"But supposing they ask me a question?"

"Evade it."

"Certainly, if I am not in a position to give my opinion but, if I have an opinion, the powers of Satan could not shut my mouth."

"So much the worse for you."

"Are the members knaves?"

"Certainly not. They are noblemen, philosophers and epicures, but they are pitiless where a bet is concerned."

"Is the club treasury rich?"

"Far from it; they are all ashamed to pay a fine and prefer to bet. Who is going to introduce you?"

"Martinelli."

"Yes, through Lord Spencer, who is a member. I refused to join."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't like argument."

"My taste runs the other way, so I shall try to get in."

"By the way, M. de Seingalt, do you know that you are a very extraordinary man?"

"For what reason, my lord?"

"You shut yourself up for a whole month with a woman who spent fourteen months in London without anybody making her acquaintance or even discovering her nationality. All the amateurs have taken a lively interest in the affair."

"How did you find out that she spent fourteen months in London?"

"Because several persons saw her in the house of a worthy widow where she spent the first month. She would never have anything to say to any advances, but the sign in your window worked wonders."

"Yes, and all the worse for me, for I feel as if I could never love another woman."

"Oh, that's childish indeed! You will love another woman in a week—nay, perhaps to-morrow if you will come and dine with me at my country house. A perfect French beauty has asked me to dine with her. I have told some of my friends who are fond of gaming."

"Does the charming Frenchwoman like gaming?"

"No, but her husband does."

"What's his name?"

"He calls himself Count de Castelbajac."

"Ah! Castelbajac?"

"Yes."

"He is a Gascon?"

"Yes."

"Tall, thin and dark and marked with smallpox?"

"Exactly! I am delighted to find you know him. You will agree with me that his wife is very pretty?"

"I really can't say. I knew Castelbajac, as he calls himself, six years ago and I never heard he was married. I shall be delighted to join you, however. I must warn you not to say anything if he seems not to know me; he may possibly have good reasons for acting in that manner. Before long I will tell you a story which does not represent him in a very advantageous manner. I did not know he gambled. I shall take care to be on my guard at the Betting Club and I advise you, my lord, to be on your guard in the society of Castelbajac."

"I will not forget the warning."

When Pembroke had left me, I went to see Madame Cornelis, who had written a week before to tell me my daughter was ill and who complained that she had been twice turned from my door, though she felt certain I was at home. To this I replied that I was in love and so happy within my own house that I had excluded all strangers. and with that she had to be contented, but the state in which I found little Sophie frightened me. She was lying in bed with high fever, she had grown much thinner and her eyes seemed to say that she was dying of grief. Her mother was in despair, for she was passionately fond of the child, and I thought she would tear my eyes out when I told her that, if Sophie died, she would have only herself to reproach. Sophie, who was very good-hearted, cried out, "No, no! papa dear!" and quieted her mother by her caresses.

Nevertheless, I took the mother aside and told her that the disease was caused solely by Sophie's dread of her severity.

"In spite of your affection," said I, "you treat her with insufferable tyranny. Send her to a boarding-school for a couple of years and let her associate with girls of good family. Tell her this evening that she is to go to school, and see if she does not get better."

"Yes," said she, "but a good boarding-school costs a hundred guineas a year, including masters."

"If I approve of the school you select, I will pay a year in advance."

On my making this offer, the woman, who seemed to be living so luxuriously but was in reality poverty-stricken, embraced me with the utmost gratitude.

"Come and tell the news to your daughter now," said she. "I should like to watch her face when she hears it."

"Certainly."

"My dear Sophie," I said, "your mother agrees with me that, if you had a change of air, you would get better and so, if you would like to spend a year or two in a good school, I will pay the first year in advance."

"Of course I will obey my dear mother," said Sophie.

"There is no question of obedience. Would you like to go to school? Tell me truly."

"But would my mother like me to go?"

"Yes, my child, if it would please you."

"Then, mamma, I should like to go very much."

Her face flushed as she spoke, and I knew that my diagnosis had been correct. I left her, saying I would hope to hear from her soon.

At ten o'clock the next day Jarbe came to ask if I had forgotten my engagement.

"No," said I, "but it is only ten o'clock."

"Yes, but we have twenty miles to go."

"Twenty miles?"

"Certainly, the house is at St. Albans."

"It's very strange Pembroke never told me; how did you find out the address?"

"He left it when he went away."

"Just like an Englishman."

I took a post-chaise and in three hours I had reached my destination. The English roads are excellent and the country offers a smiling prospect on every side. The vine is lacking, for, though the English soil is fertile, it will not bear grapes.

Lord Pembroke's house was not a particularly large one, but twenty masters and their servants could easily be accommodated in it.

The lady had not yet arrived, so my lord showed me his gardens, his fountains and his magnificent hothouses, also a cock chained by the leg and of a truly ferocious aspect.

"What have we here, my lord?"

"A cock."

"I see it is, but why do you chain it?"

"Because it is savage. It is very amorous and, if it were let loose, it would go after the hens and kill all the cocks on the countryside."

"But why do you condemn him to celibacy?"

"To make him fiercer. Here, this is the list of his conquests."

He gave me a list of his cock's victories, in which he had killed the other bird; this had happened more than thirty times. He then showed me the steel spurs, at the sight of which the cock began to ruffle and crow. I could not help laughing to see such a martial spirit in so small an animal. He seemed possessed by the demon of strife and lifted now one foot and now the other, as if to beg that his arms might be put on.

Pembroke then exhibited the helmet, also of steel.

"But with such arms," said I, "he is sure of conquest."

"No; for, when he is armed cap-à-pie, he will not fight with a defenceless cock."

"I can't believe it, my lord."

"It's a well known fact. Here, read this."

He then gave me a piece of paper with this remarkable biped's pedigree. He could prove his thirty-two quarters more easily than a good many noblemen—on the father's side, be it understood, for, if he could have proved pure blood on the mother's side as well, Lord Pembroke would have decorated him with the Order of the Golden Fleece at least.

"The bird cost me a hundred guineas," said he, "but I would not sell him for a thousand."

"Has he any offspring?"

"He tries his best, but there are difficulties."

I do not remember whether Lord Pembroke explained what those difficulties were. Certainly the English offer more peculiarities to the attentive observer than any other nation.

At last a carriage containing a lady and two gentlemen drove up to the door. One of the gentlemen was the rascally Casteljajac and the other was introduced as Count Schwerin, nephew of the famous

marshal of that name who fell on what is commonly called the field of glory. General Bekw—, an Englishman who was in the service of the King of Prussia and was one of Pembroke's guests, received Schwerin politely, saying he had seen his uncle die; at this, the modest nephew drew the Order of the Black Eagle from his breast and showed it to us all covered with blood.

"My uncle wore it on the day of his death and the King of Prussia allowed me to keep it as a noble memorial of my kinsman."

"Yes," said an Englishman who was present, "but one's coat pocket is not the place for a thing like that."

Schwerin made as if he did not understand and this enabled me to take his measure.

Lord Pembroke took possession of the lady, whom I did not think worthy of being compared to Pauline. She was paler and shorter and utterly deficient in Pauline's noble air; besides, when she smiled, it spoiled her face and this is a defect in a woman, to whom laughter should always be becoming.

Lord Pembroke introduced us all to each other and, when he came to me, Castelbajac said he was delighted to see me again, although he might easily have pretended not to know me under my name of Seingalt.

We had a good English dinner and afterwards the lady proposed a game of faro. Milord never played, so the general consented to amuse the company by holding the bank and placed a hundred guineas and several bank notes on the table. There might have been a thousand guineas in all. He gave twenty counters to each punter, saying that every counter was worth ten shillings. As I staked only gold against gold, I would not accept them. By the third deal Schwerin had lost his twenty counters and asked for twenty more, but the banker told him he must pay for them and the self-styled field-marshal's nephew lapsed into silence and played no more.

At the following deal Castelbajac was in the same position as his friend and, being on my side, he begged to be allowed to take ten pieces.

"You will bring me ill luck," I said, coldly, warding off his hand; and he went out to the garden, no doubt to swallow the affront he had received. The lady said her husband had forgotten his pocketbook. An hour afterwards the game came to an end and I took my leave, after inviting Lord Pembroke and the rest of the company to dine with me the next day.

I got home at eleven o'clock without meeting any highwaymen, as I had expected; indeed, I had put six guineas in a small purse for their special benefit. I woke up my cook to tell him that the next day I would have twelve people to dinner and I hoped he would do me honour. I found a letter from Madame Cornelis on my table, telling me that she and her daughter would take a drive with me on the following Sunday and that we could go and see the boarding-school she had selected.

Next day Lord Pembroke and the fair Frenchwoman were the first

to arrive. They drove in a carriage with two rather uncomfortable seats, but this discomfort is favourable to love. The Gascon and the Prussian were the last to come.

We sat down to table at two and left it at four, all of us well pleased with the cook and still more so with the wine merchant, for, though we had emptied four bottles of wine, not one of us was at all intoxicated.

After coffee had been served, the general invited us all to sup with him and Madame Castelbajac begged me to hold a bank. I did not wait to be pressed but placed a thousand guineas on the table and, as I had no counters of any kind, I warned the company that I would only play gold against gold and stop playing whenever I thought fit.

Before the game began, the two counts paid their losses of the day before to the general in bank notes, which he begged me to change. I also changed two other notes presented to me by the same gentleman and put them all under my snuffbox. Play began. I had no croupier, so I was obliged to deal slowly and keep an eye on the two counts, whose method of play was very questionable. At last both of them were dried up and Castelbajac gave me a bill of exchange for two hundred guineas, begging me to discount it for him.

"I know nothing about business," I replied.

An Englishman took the bill and, after a careful examination, said he knew neither the drawer, the acceptor nor the backer.

"I am the backer," said Castelbajac, "and that ought to be enough, I think."

Everybody laughed except myself and I gave it back to him courteously, saying politely that he could get it discounted on 'Change the next day. He got up in a bad temper and left the room, murmuring some insolent expressions. Schwerin followed him.

After these two worthy gentlemen had left us, I went on dealing till the night was far advanced, and then left off, though I was behind. However, the general was having a run of luck and I thought it best to stop. Before leaving, he took me and Lord Pembroke aside and begged me to contrive that the two knaves should not come to his house the following day. "For," said he, "if that Gascon were to be half as insolent to me as he was to you, I should show him out by the window."

Pembroke said he would tell the lady of the general's wishes.

"Do you think," said I, "that those four notes of theirs can be forgeries?"

"It's very possible."

"What would you advise my doing to clear the matter up?"

"I would send them to the bank."

"And if they should be forgeries?"

"I would have patience or I would arrest the rascals."

The next day I went to the bank myself and the person to whom I gave the notes gave me them back, saying coldly, "These notes are bad, sir."

"Be kind enough to examine them closely."

"It's no use; they are evident forgeries. Return them to the person from whom you got them and he will be only too glad to cash them."

I was perfectly aware that I could put the two knaves under lock and key, but I did not want to do so. I went to Lord Pembroke to find out their address, but he was still in bed and one of his servants took me to them. They were surprised to see me. I told them coolly enough that the four notes were forged and that I should feel much obliged if they would give me forty guineas and take their notes back.

"I haven't any money," said Castelbajac, "and what you say astonishes me very much. I can only return them to the persons who gave them to me if they are really the same notes that we gave you yesterday."

At this suggestion, the blood rushed to my face and, with a withering glance and an indignant apostrophe, I left them. Lord Pembroke's servant took me to a magistrate, who, having heard my statement on oath, gave me a paper authorising me to arrest the two counts. I gave the document to an alderman, who said he would see it was carried out, and I went home ill pleased with the whole business.

Martinelli was waiting for me; he had come to ask me to invite him to dinner. I told him my story, without adding that the knaves were to be arrested, and his advice, delivered with philosophic calm, was to make an *auto-da-fé* of the four notes. It was very good advice, but I did not take it.

The worthy Martinelli, thinking to oblige me, told me he had arranged with Lord Spencer the day on which I was to be introduced to the Betting Club, but I answered that my fancy for going there was over. I ought to have treated this learned and distinguished man with more politeness, but who can sound human weakness to its depths? One often feels resentment against a wise man for advice which one has not the courage to follow.

In the evening I went to the general's and found the self-styled Countess Castelbajac seated on Lord Pembroke's lap. The supper was a good one and passed off pleasantly; the two rascals were not there and their absence was not remarked. When we left the table, we went into another room and played till daybreak. I left the board with a loss of two or three hundred guineas.

I did not wake till late the next morning and, when I did, my man told me someone wanted to speak to me. I had him shown in and, as he spoke only English, the negro had to be our interpreter. He was the Chief of Police and told me that, if I would pay for his journey, he would arrest Castelbajac at Dover, for which town he had started at noon. As to the other, he was sure of having him in the course of the night. I gave him a guinea and told him it would be enough to catch the latter and the other could take to the woods.

The next day was Sunday, the only day on which Madame Cornelis could go abroad without fear of the bailiff. She came to dine with me and brought her daughter, whom the prospect of leaving her mother

had quite cured. The school which Madame Cornelis had chosen was at Harwich and we went there after dinner.

The headmistress was a Catholic and, though she must have been sixty, she looked keen and witty and as if she knew the ways of the world. She had received a letter of recommendation from Lady Harrington and so welcomed the young lady in the most cordial manner. She had about fifteen young boarders of thirteen or fourteen years of age. When she presented Sophie to them as a new companion, they crowded round her and covered her with caresses. Five or six were perfect angels of beauty and two or three were hideously ugly; such extremes are more common in England than anywhere else. My daughter was the smallest of them all but, as far as beauty went, she had nothing to fear by comparison and her talents placed her on a par with the eldest, while she responded to their caresses with that ease which later in life is acquired only with great difficulty.

We went over the house and all the girls followed us; those who could speak French or Italian spoke to me, saying how much they would love my daughter, while those who could not speak sufficiently well held off, as if ashamed of their ignorance. We saw the bedrooms, the dining-room, the drawing-room, the harps and the pianos—in fact, everything and I decided that Sophie could not be better placed. We went into the headmistress's private room and Madame Cornelis paid a hundred guineas in advance and obtained a receipt. We then agreed that Sophie should be received as a boarder as soon as she liked to come, that she was to bring her bed with her and all the necessary linen. Madame Cornelis made the final arrangements on the ensuing Sunday.

Next day the alderman told me that Count Schwerin was a prisoner and wanted to speak to me. I declined at first, but, as the alderman's messenger told me through Jarbe that the poor devil had not a farthing in his pocket, I was moved with compassion. As he was charged with issuing forged notes, he had been taken to Newgate and was in danger of being hanged.

I followed the magistrate's messenger and cannot describe how the poor wretch's woeful aspect, his tears and supplications for mercy moved my heart. He swore that Castelbajac had given him the notes, but he added that he knew where they came from originally and would tell me if I would release him.

A little bitterness still remained in my breast, so I told him that, if he knew who had forged the notes, he could certainly escape the gallows, but that I should keep him prisoner till I got my money back. At this threat, his tears and supplication began over again and with renewed force and, telling me that he was in utter poverty, he emptied his pockets one after the other to show me that he had no money, and at last offered me the bloodstained badge of his uncle. I was delighted to be able to relieve him without any appearance of weakness and accepted the bauble as a pledge, telling him that he should have it back on payment of forty pounds.

I wrote out a formal release and in his presence and that of the alderman I burnt the four notes and set him free.

Two days afterwards the so-called countess came to my house, saying that, now Castelbajac and Schwerin were gone, she knew not where to lay her head. She complained bitterly of Lord Pembroke, who had deserted her after making her give him the clearest proofs of her affection. By way of consolation, I told her that it would have been very foolish of him to abandon her before instead of after.

To get rid of her, I was obliged to give her the money to pay her journey to Calais. She told me she did not want to rejoin the Gascon, who was not really her husband. We shall hear more of these persons in the course of three years.

Two or three days later an Italian called on me and gave me a letter from my friend Baletti, which recommended the bearer, Constantini, a native of Vicenza, to my good offices. He had come to London on a matter of importance, in which I could help him.

I assured M. Constantini that I was only too happy to do anything to justify the confidence placed in me by one of my best friends and he said that the long journey had almost exhausted his purse, but he added:

"I know that my wife lives here and that she is rich. I shall easily find out where she lives and you know that, as I am her husband, all that is hers is mine."

"I was not aware of that."

"Then you don't know the laws of this country?"

"Not at all."

"I am sorry to hear it, but such is the case. I am going to her house and I shall turn her out of doors with nothing else but the dress on her back, for the furniture, clothes, jewels, linen—in fact, all her possessions, belong to me. May I ask you to be with me when I perform this exploit?"

I was astonished. I asked him if he had told Baletti what he intended to do.

"You are the first person to whom I have disclosed my intentions."

I could not treat him as a madman, for he did not look like one, and, concluding that there really might be the law he had alleged, I replied that I did not feel inclined to join him in his enterprise, of which I disapproved very strongly, unless his wife had actually robbed him of what she possessed.

"She has only robbed me of my honour, sir, and she left me, taking her talents with her. She must have made a great fortune here and have I not a right to take it from her, were it only for vengeance' sake?"

"That may be, but I ask you what you would think of me if I agreed to join you in an undertaking which seems cruel to me, however good your reasons may be. Besides, I may know your wife; she may even be a friend of mine."

"I will tell you her name."

"No, I beg of you not to do so, although I do not know any Madame Constantini."

"She has changed her name to Calori and she sings at the Hay-market."

"I know who she is now. I am sorry you told me."

"I have no doubt you will keep my secret and I am now going to find out where she lives, for that is the principal thing."

He left me weeping and I pitied him, but at the same time I was sorry he had made me the depositary of his secret. A few hours after I called on Madame Binetti and she told me the histories of all the artistes in London. When she came to the Calori, she told me she had had several lovers, out of whom she had made a great deal, but at present had no lover, unless it were the violinist Giardini, with whom she was in love in earnest.

"Where does she come from?"

"From Vicenza."

"Is she married?"

"I don't think so."

I thought no more of this wretched business, but three or four days later I had a letter from King's Bench Prison. It was from Constantini. The poor wretch said I was the only friend he had in London and that he hoped I would come and see him, were it only to give him some advice.

I thought it my duty to accede to his request and I went to the prison, where I found the poor man in a wretched state, with an old English attorney, who spoke a little bad Italian and was known to me.

Constantini had been arrested the day before on account of several bills drawn by his wife which had not been taken up. By these bills she appeared in debt to the amount of a thousand guineas. The attorney had the five bills and he was trying to make some arrangements with the husband.

I saw at once that the whole thing was a scandalous swindle, for Madame Binetti had told me that the Calori was very rich. I begged the attorney to leave me alone with the prisoner, as I wanted to have some private conversation with him.

"They have arrested me for my wife's debts," said he, "and they tell me I must pay them because I am her husband."

"It's a trick your wife has played on you; she must have found out you were in London."

"She saw me through the window."

"Why did you delay putting your project into execution?"

"I meant to carry it out this morning, but how was I to know that she had debts?"

"Nor has she any debts; these bills are shams. They must have been ante-dated, for they were really executed yesterday. It's a bad business and she may have to pay dearly for it."

"But in the meanwhile I am in prison."

"Never mind; trust me. I will see you again to-morrow."

This scurvy trick had made me angry and I made up my mind to take up the poor mar's cause. I went to Bosanquet, who told me that the device was a very common one in London, but that people had found out the way to defeat it. Finally he said that, if the prisoner interested me, he would put the case into the hands of a barrister who would extricate him from his difficulty and make the wife and the lover, who had probably helped her, repent of their day's work. I begged him to act as if my interests were at stake and promised to guarantee all expenses.

"That's enough," said he. "Don't trouble yourself any more about it."

Some days after Mr. Bosanquet came to tell me that Constantini had left the prison and England as well, according to what the barrister who had charge of the case told him.

"Impossible!"

"Not at all. His wife's lover, foreseeing the storm that was about to burst over their heads, got round the fellow and made him leave the country by means of a sum more or less large."

The affair was over, but it was soon in all the newspapers, garnished with all the wit imaginable, and Giardini was warmly praised for the action he had taken.

As for me, I was glad enough to have the matter over, but I felt vexed with Constantini for having fled without giving the lovers a lesson. I wrote an account of the circumstances to Baletti and I heard from Madame Binetti that the Calori had given her husband a hundred guineas to leave the country. Some years later I saw the Calori at Prague.

A Flemish officer, the man whom I had helped at Aix-la-Chapelle, had called on me several times and had even dined three or four times with me. I reproached myself for not having been polite enough to return his call and, when we met in the street and he reproached me for not having been to see him, I was obliged to blush. He had his wife and daughter with him and some feeling of shame and a good deal of curiosity made me call on him.

When he saw me, he threw his arms about my neck, calling me his preserver. I was obliged to receive all the compliments which knaves make to honest men when they hope to take them in. A few moments after an old woman and a girl came in and I was introduced as the Chevalier de Seingalt, of whom he had spoken so often. The girl, affecting surprise, said she had known a M. Casanova, who was very like me. I answered that Casanova was my name as well as Seingalt, but that I had not the happiness of recollecting her.

"My name was Anspersgher when I saw you," she replied, "but now it is Charpillon; and, considering that we met only once and that I was only thirteen at the time I do not wonder at your not recollecting me. I have been in London with my mother and aunts for the last four years."

"But where had I the pleasure of speaking to you?"

"In Paris."

"In what part of Paris?"

"In the Bazaar You were with a charming lady, and you gave me these buckles" (she showed me them on her shoes) "and you also did me the honour to kiss me."

I recollected the circumstance and the reader will remember that I was with Madame Baret, the fair stocking-seller.

"Now I remember you," said I, "but I do not recognise your aunt."

"This is the sister of the one you saw, but, if you will take tea with us, you will see her."

"Where do you live?"

"In Denmark Street, Soho."

CHAPTER 109

THE name Charpillon reminded me that I was the bearer of a letter for her and, drawing it from my pocketbook, I gave it her, saying that the document ought to cement our acquaintance.

"What!" she exclaimed, "a letter from dear ambassador Morosini. How delighted I am to have it! And you have actually been all these months in London without giving it me?"

"I confess I am to blame but, as you see, the note has no address on it I am grateful for the chance which has enabled me to discharge my commission to-day."

"Come and dine with us to-morrow."

"I cannot do so, as I am expecting Lord Pembroke to dinner."

"Will you be alone?"

"I expect so."

"I am glad to hear it; you will see my aunt and myself there. Where do you live?"

"Here is my address and I shall be delighted if you will come to see me."

She took the address and I was surprised to see her smile as she read it.

"Then you are the Italian," she said, "who put up that notice that amused all the town?"

"I am."

"They say the joke cost you dear."

"Quite the reverse; it resulted in the greatest happiness."

"But, now that the beloved object has left you, I suppose you are unhappy?"

"I am, but there are sorrows so sweet that they are almost joys."

"Nobody knows who she was, but I suppose you do?"

"Yes."

"Do you make a mystery of it?"

"Surely, and I would rather die than reveal it."

"Ask my aunt if I did not want to make application to rent one of your rooms, but my mother would not let me."

"Why should you want to lodge cheaply?"

"I don't want to lodge cheaply, but I should like to punish the audacious author of that notice."

"How would you punish me?"

"By making you fall in love with me and then tormenting you. It would have amused me immensely."

"Then you think you can inspire me with love and at the same time you form the dreadful plan of tyrannising over the victim of your charms. Such a project is monstrous and, unhappily for us poor men, you do not look a monster. Nevertheless, I am obliged to you for your frankness and I shall be on my guard."

"Then you must take care never to see me or else all your efforts will be in vain."

As La Charpillon had laughed merrily through the whole of this dialogue, I took it all as a jest, but I could not help admiring her manner, which seemed made for the subjugation of men. But, though I knew it not, the day I made that woman's acquaintance was a luckless one for me, as my readers will see.

It was towards the end of the month of September, 1763, when I met La Charpillon and from that day I began to die. If the lines of ascent and declination are equal, now, on this first day of November, 1797, I have about four more years of life to reckon on, which will pass by swiftly, according to the axiom *Motus in fine velocior*.

La Charpillon, who was well known in London, and I believe is still alive, was one of those beauties in whom it is difficult to find any positive fault. Her hair was chestnut-coloured and astonishingly long and thick; her blue eyes were at once languorous and brilliant; her skin, faintly tinged with a rosy hue, was of a dazzling whiteness, she was tall for her age and seemed likely to become as tall as Pauline. Her breast was perhaps a little small but perfectly shaped, her hands were white and plump, her feet small and her gait had something noble and gracious. Her features were of that exquisite sensitiveness which gives so much charm to the fair sex, but nature had given her a beautiful body and a deformed soul. This siren had formed a design to wreck my happiness even before she knew me and, as if to add to her triumph, she told me as much.

I left Malingan's house not like a man who, fond of the fair sex, is glad to have made the acquaintance of a beautiful woman, but in a state of stupefaction that the image of Pauline, which was always before me, was not strong enough to overcome the influence of a creature like La Charpillon, whom in my heart I could not help despising.

I calmed myself by saying that this strong impression was due to novelty, and by hoping that I should soon be disenchanted.

"She will have no charm," said I, "when I have once possessed her and that will not be long in coming."

Perhaps the reader will think I was too presumptuous, but why

should I have supposed there would be any difficulty? She had asked me to dinner herself; she had surrendered entirely to Morosini, who was not the man to sigh for long at any woman's feet and must have paid her, for he was not young or handsome enough to inspire her with a fancy for him. Without counting my physical attractions, I had plenty of money and was not afraid of spending it and so I thought I could count on an easy victory.

Pembroke had become an intimate friend of mine since my proceedings with regard to Schwerin. He admired my conduct in not making any claim on the general for half my loss. He had said we would get up a party and make a pleasant day of it and, when he saw my table laid for four, he asked who the other guests were to be. He was extremely surprised when he heard that they were La Charpillon and her aunt and that the girl had invited herself when she heard he was to dine with me.

"I once took a violent fancy to the little hussy," said he. "It was one evening when I was at Vauxhall and I offered her twenty guineas if she would come and take a little walk with me in a dark alley. She said she would come if I gave her the money in advance, which I was fool enough to do. She went with me but, as soon as we were alone, she ran away and I could not catch her again, though I looked for her all evening."

"You ought to have boxed her ears before everybody."

"I should have got into trouble and people would have laughed at me besides. I preferred to despise her and the money, too. Are you in love with her?"

"No; but I am curious, as you were."

"Take care! She will do all in her power to entrap you."

She came in and went up to milord with the most perfect coolness and began to chatter away to him without taking any notice of me. She laughed, joked and reproached him for not having pursued her at Vauxhall. Her stratagem, she said, was meant only to excite him the more.

"Another time," she added, "I shall not escape you."

"Perhaps not, my dear, for another time I shall take care not to pay in advance."

"Oh, fie! 'Pay' is a vulgar word that dishonours you."

"And honours you, I suppose?"

"We never talk of such things."

Lord Pembroke laughed at her impertinences, while she made a vigorous assault on him, for his coolness and indifference piqued her.

She left soon after dinner, making me promise to dine with her the day after next.

I passed the next day with the amiable nobleman who initiated me into the mysteries of the English bagnio, an entertainment which I shall not describe, for it is well known to all who care to spend six guineas.

On the day appointed, my evil destiny made me go to La Charpil-

lon's; the girl introduced me to her mother, whom I at once recollected, although she had aged and altered since I had seen her.

In the year 1759 a Genevan named Bolomé had persuaded me to sell jewels to this woman to the extent of six thousand francs. She had paid me in bills drawn by her and her two sisters on Bolomé, but they were then known as Anspersgher. The Genevan became bankrupt before the bills were due, and the three sisters disappeared. As may be imagined, I was surprised to find them in England and especially to be introduced to them by La Charpillon, who, knowing nothing of the affair of the jewels, had not told them that Seingalt was the same as Casanova, whom they had cheated of six thousand francs.

"I am delighted to see you again," were the first words I addressed to the mother.

"I recollect you, sir. That rascal Bolomé . . ."

"We will discuss that subject another time. I see you are ill."

"I have been at death's door, but am better now. My daughter did not tell me your proper name."

"Yes, she did. My name is Seingalt as well as Casanova. I was known by the latter name in Paris when I made your daughter's acquaintance, though I did not know then that she was your daughter."

Just then the grandmother, whose name was also Anspersgher, came in with the two aunts and a quarter of an hour later three men arrived, one of whom was the Chevalier Goudar, whom I had met in Paris. I did not know the others, who were introduced to me under the names of Rostaing and Caumon. They were three friends of the household, whose business it was to bring in dupes.

Such was the infamous company in which I found myself and, though I took its measure directly, yet I did not make my escape, nor did I resolve never to go to the house again. I was fascinated; I thought I would be on my guard and be safe and, as I only wanted the daughter, I looked on all else as of little moment.

At table I led the conversation and thought that my prey would soon be within my grasp. The only thing which annoyed me was that La Charpillon, after apologising for having made me sit down to such a poor dinner, invited herself and all the company to sup with me on any day I chose to name. I could make no opposition, so I begged her to set the day herself and she did so after a consultation with her worthy friends.

After coffee had been served, we played four rubbers of whist, at which I lost, and at midnight I went away ill pleased with myself but with no purpose of amendment, for this sorceress had got me in her toils.

All the same, I had the strength of mind to refrain from seeing her for two days, and on the third, which was the day appointed for the cursed supper, she and her aunt paid me a call at nine o'clock in the morning.

"I have come to breakfast with you and to discuss a certain question," said she, in the most engaging manner.

"Will you tell me your business now or after breakfast?"

"After breakfast, for we must be alone."

We had our breakfast and then the aunt went into another room and La Charpillon, after describing the monetary situation of the family, told me it would be much relieved if her aunt could obtain a hundred guineas.

"What would she do with the money?"

"She would make the *Balm of Life*, of which she possesses the secret, and no doubt she would make her fortune, too."

She then began to dilate on the marvellous properties of the balm, on its probable success in a town like London and on the benefits which would accrue to myself, for of course I should share in the profits. She added that her mother and aunt would give me a written promise to repay the money in the course of six years.

"I will give you a definite answer after supper."

I then began to caress her and to make advances in the style of an amorous man, but it was all in vain, though I succeeded in stretching her on a large sofa. She made her escape and ran to her aunt, while I followed her, feeling obliged to laugh, as she did. She gave me her hand and said, "Farewell till this evening."

When they were gone, I reflected over what had passed and thought this first scene of no bad augury. I saw that I should get nothing out of her without spending a hundred guineas and I determined not to attempt to bargain, but I would let her understand that she must make up her mind not to play the prude. The game was in my hands and all I had to do was to take care not to be duped.

In the evening the company arrived and the girl asked me to hold a bank till supper was ready, but I declined, with a burst of laughter that seemed to puzzle her.

"At least, let us have a game of whist," said she.

"It seems to me," I answered, "that you don't feel very anxious to hear my reply."

"You have made up your mind, I suppose?"

"I have, follow me."

She followed me into an adjoining room and, after she had seated herself on a sofa, I told her that the hundred guineas were at her disposal.

"Then please to give the money to my aunt, otherwise these gentlemen might think I got it from you by some improper means."

"I will do so."

I tried to get possession of her but in vain, and I ceased my endeavours when she said, "You will get nothing from me by either money or violence, but you can hope for all when I find you really nice and quiet."

I returned to the drawing-room and, feeling my blood boiling, I began to play in order to quiet myself. She was as gay as ever, but her gaiety annoyed me. At supper I had her on my right, but the hundred

impertinences which under other circumstances would have amused me, only bored me after the two rebuffs I had received from her.

After supper, just as they were going, she took me aside and told me that, if I wanted to hand over the hundred guineas, she would tell her aunt to go with me into the next room.

"As documents have to be executed," I replied, "it will take some time; we will talk of it later."

"Won't you fix the time?"

I drew out my purse full of gold and showed it her, saying, "The time depends entirely on you."

When my hateful guests were gone, I began to reflect and came to the conclusion that this young adventuress had determined to plunder me without giving me anything in return. I determined to have nothing more to do with her, but I could not get her beauty out of my mind.

I felt I needed some distraction, something that would give me new aims and make me forget her. With this idea, I went to see my daughter, taking with me an immense bag of sweets.

As soon as I was in the midst of the little flock, the delight became general, Sophie distributing the sweetmeats to her friends, who received them gratefully.

I spent a happy day and during the next week or two I paid several visits to Harwich. The mistress treated me with the utmost politeness and my daughter with boundless affection, always called me "dear papa."

In less than three weeks I congratulated myself on having forgotten the Charpillon and replaced her by innocent amours, though one of my daughter's schoolmates pleased me rather too much for my peace of mind.

Such was my condition when one morning the favourite aunt of the Charpillon paid me a call and said that they were all mystified at not having seen me since the supper I had given them, especially herself, as her niece had given her to understand that I would furnish her with the means of making the *Balm of Life*.

"Certainly; I would have given you the hundred guineas if your niece had treated me as a friend, but she refused me favours a vestal might have granted, and you must be aware that she is by no means a vestal."

"Don't mind my laughing. My niece is an innocent, giddy girl; she loves you, but she is afraid you have only a passing whim for her. She is in bed now with a bad cold and, if you will come and see her, I am sure you will be satisfied."

These artful remarks, which had no doubt been prepared in advance, ought to have aroused all my scorn, but instead of that they awakened the most violent desires. I laughed in chorus with the old woman and asked what would be the best time to call.

"Come at once and give only one knock."

"Very good; then you may expect me shortly."

I congratulated myself on being on the verge of success, for, after

the explanation I had had with the aunt and having, as I thought, a friend in her, I did not doubt that I should succeed.

I put on my greatcoat and in less than a quarter of an hour, knocked at their door. The aunt opened to me and said, "Come back in a quarter of an hour; she has been ordered a bath and is just going to take it."

"This is another imposture. You're as bad a liar as she."

"You are cruel and unjust and, if you will promise to be discreet, I will take you up to the third floor, where she is bathing."

"Very well, let us go."

She went upstairs, I following on tiptoe, and she pushed me into a room and shut the door on me. The Charpillon was in a huge bath, with her head towards the door, and the infernal coquette, pretending to think it was her aunt, did not move and said, "Give me the towels, aunt."

She was most seductive and I had the pleasure of gazing on her exquisite proportions, hardly veiled by the water.

When she caught sight of me—or, rather, pretended to do so—she gave a shriek, huddled her limbs together and said, with affected anger, "Begone!"

"You needn't exert your voice, for I am not going to be duped."

"Begone!"

"Not so; give me a little time to collect myself."

"I tell you, go!"

"Calm yourself and don't be afraid of my showing you any violence; that would suit your game too well."

"My aunt shall pay dearly for this!"

"She will find me her friend. I won't touch you."

"Leave the room!"

"I have told you I am not going and that you need not fear for your . . . well, for your virginity, we will say."

The aunt came in just then and I went out without a word, well pleased to find myself despising a character wherein profit and loss usurped the place of feeling.

The aunt came to me as I was going out of the house and, after inquiring if I was satisfied, begged me to come into the parlor.

"Yes," said I, "I am perfectly satisfied—satisfied to know both you and your niece in your true characters. Here is the reward."

With these words I drew a bank note for a hundred pounds from my pocketbook and was foolish enough to give it to her, telling her that she could make her balm and need not trouble to give me any document, as I knew it would be of no value. I had not the strength to go away without giving her anything and the procuress was sharp enough to know it.

When I got home I reflected on what had happened and pronounced myself the conqueror with great triumph. I felt well at ease and was sure I should never set foot in that house again. There were seven of them altogether, including servants, and the need of subsisting made them do anything for a living and, when they found themselves obliged

to make use of men, they summoned the three rascals I have named, who were equally dependent on them.

Five or six days afterwards I met the little hussy at Vauxhall in company with Goudar. I avoided her at first, but she came up to me, reproaching me for my rudeness. I replied coolly enough but, affecting not to notice my manner, she asked me to come into an arbour with her and take a cup of tea.

"No, thank you," I replied. "I prefer supper."

"Then I will take some, too, and you will invite me, won't you, just to show that you bear no malice?"

I ordered supper for four and we sat down together as if we had been intimate friends.

Her charming conversation, combined with her beauty, gradually drew me under her charm and, as the drink began to exercise its influence over me, I proposed a turn in one of the dark walks, expressing a hope that I should fare better than Lord Pembroke. She said gently and with an appearance of sincerity that deceived me that she wanted to be mine, but by day and on condition that I would come to see her every day.

"I will do so, but first give me one little proof of your love."

"Most certainly not."

I got up to pay the bill and then I left without a word, refusing to take her home. I went home by myself and went to bed.

The first thought when I awoke was that I was glad she had not taken me at my word, I felt very strongly that it was to my interest to break off all connection between that creature and myself. I felt the strength of her influence over me and that my only way was either to keep away from her or either to renounce all pretension to the possession of her charms.

The latter plan seemed to me impossible, so I determined to adhere to the former, but the wretched woman had resolved to defeat all my plans. The manner in which she succeeded must have been the result of a council of the whole society.

A few days after the Vauxhall supper Goudar called on me and began by congratulating me on my resolution not to visit the Anspersghers any more. "For," said he, "the girl would have made you more and more in love with her and in the end she would have reduced you to beggary."

"You must think me a great fool. If I had found her kind, I should have been grateful but without squandering all my money; and, if she had been cruel, instead of ridiculous, I might have given her every day what I have already given her, without reducing myself to beggary."

"I congratulate you; it shows that you are well off. But have you made up your mind not to see her again?"

"Certainly."

"Then you are not in love with her?"

"I have been in love, but I am so no longer and in a few days she

will have passed completely out of my memory. I had almost forgotten her when I met her with you at Vauxhall."

"You are not cured The way to be cured of an amour does not lie in flight when the two parties live in the same town. Meetings will happen and all the trouble has to be taken over again."

"Then do you know a better way?"

"Certainly; you should satiate yourself. It is quite possible that the creature is not in love with you, but you are rich and she has nothing. You might have had her for so much and you could have left her when you found her to be unworthy of your constancy. You must know what kind of woman she is "

"I would have tried this method gladly, but I found her out."

"You could have got the best of her, though, if you had gone to work in the proper way. You should never have paid in advance. I know everything."

"What do you mean?"

"I know she has cost you a hundred guineas and that you have not won so much as a kiss from her. Why, my dear sir, you might have had her comfortably in your own bed for as much! She boasts that she took you in, though you pride yourself on your craftiness."

"It was an act of charity towards her aunt."

"Yes, to make her *Balm of Life*; but you know, if it had not been for the niece, the aunt would never have had the money."

"Perhaps not, but how come you, who are of their party, to be talking to me in this fashion?"

"I swear to you I speak only out of friendship for you, and I will tell you how I came to make the acquaintance of the girl, her mother, her grandmother and her two aunts, and then you will no longer consider me as of their party."

"Sixteen months ago I saw M. Morosini walking about Vauxhall by himself. He had just come to England to congratulate the King on his accession to the throne, on behalf of the Republic of Venice. I saw how enchanted he was with the London beauties and I went up to him and told him that all these beauties were at his service. This made him laugh and, on my repeating that it was not a jest, he pointed out one of the girls and asked if she would be at his service. I did not know her, so I asked him to wait awhile and I would bring him the information he required. There was no time to be lost and I could see that the girl was not a vestal virgin, so I went up to her and told her that the Venetian ambassador was amorous of her and that I would bring him to see her if she would receive his visits. The aunt said that a nobleman of such an exalted rank could bring only honour to her niece; I took her address and on my way back to the ambassador I met a friend of mine who is learned in such commodities and, after I had showed him the address, he told me it was La Charpillon."

"And it was she?"

"It was. My friend told me she was a young Swiss girl who was not

yet in the general market, but who would soon be there, as she was not rich and had a numerous retinue to support.

"I rejoined the Venetian and told him that his business was done, and asked him at what time I should introduce him the next day, warning him that, as she had a mother and aunts, she would not be alone. 'I am glad to hear it,' said he, 'and also that she is not a common woman.' He gave me an appointment for the next day and we parted.

"I told the ladies at what hour I should have the pleasure of introducing the great man to them and, after instructing them how they should conduct themselves, I went home.

"The following day I called on M. de Morosini and took him to Denmark Street incognito. We spent an hour in conversation and then went away without anything being settled. On the way back the ambassador told me he would like to have the girl on conditions which he would give me in writing at his residence.

"These conditions were that she should live in a furnished house free of rent, without any companion and without receiving any visitors. His excellency would give her fifty guineas a month and pay for supper whenever he came and spent the night with her. He told me to get the house if his conditions were accepted. The mother was to sign the agreement.

"The ambassador was in a hurry and in three days the agreement was signed, but I obtained a document from the mother promising to let me have the girl for one night as soon as the Venetian had gone; it was known he was stopping in London for only a year."

Goudar extracted the document in question from his pocket and gave it to me. I read it and re-read it with as much surprise as pleasure and he then proceeded with his story.

"When the ambassador had gone, La Charpillon, finding herself at liberty once more, had Lord Baltimore, Lord Grosvenor and M. de Saa, the Portuguese ambassador, in turn, but no titular lover. I insisted on having my night with her according to agreement, but both mother and daughter laughed at me when I spoke of it. I cannot arrest her, because she is a minor, but I will have the mother imprisoned at the first opportunity and you will see how the town will laugh. Now you know why I go to their house, and I assure you you are wrong if you think I have any part in their councils. Nevertheless, I know they are discussing how they may catch you, and they will do so if you do not take care."

"Tell the mother I have another hundred guineas at her service if she will let me have her daughter for a single night."

"Do you mean that?"

"Assuredly, but I am not going to pay in advance."

"That's the only way not to be duped. I shall be glad to execute your commission."

I kept the rogue to dinner, thinking he might be useful to me. He knew everything and everybody and told me a number of amusing anecdotes. Although a good-for-nothing fellow, he had his merits.

He had written several works, which, though badly constructed, showed he was a man of some wit. He was then writing his *Chinese Spy* and every day he wrote five or six news letters from the various coffee-houses he frequented. I wrote one or two letters for him, with which he was much pleased. The reader will see how I met him again in Naples some years later.

The next morning, what was my surprise to see La Charpillon, who said with an air that I would have taken for modesty in any other woman, "I don't want you to invite me to breakfast; I want an explanation and to introduce Miss Lorenzi to you."

I bowed to her and to her companion and then said, "What explanation do you want?"

At this point Miss Lorenzi, whom I had never seen before, thought proper to withdraw and I told my man I was not at home to anybody. I ordered breakfast to be served to the companion of the nymph, that she might not find the waiting tedious.

"Sir," said La Charpillon, "is it a fact that you charged the Chevalier Goudar to tell my mother you would give a hundred guineas to spend the night with me?"

"No, not to spend a night with you but after I had spent it. Isn't the price enough?"

"No jesting, sir, if you please. There is no question of bargaining; all I want to know is, whether you think you have a right to insult me and that I am going to bear it?"

"If you think yourself insulted, I may, perhaps, confess I was wrong; but I confess I did not think I should have to listen to any reproaches from you. Goudar is one of your intimate friends and this is not the first proposal he has taken to you. I could not address you directly, as I know your arts only too well."

"I shall not pay any attention to your abuse of me; I will only remind you of what I said—that neither money nor violence were of any use and that your only way was to make me in love with you by gentle means. Show me where I have broken my word! It is you who fore-swore yourself by coming into my bathroom and by sending such a brutal message to my mother. No one but a rascal like Goudar would have dared to take such a message."

"Goudar a rascal, is he? Well, he is your best friend. You know he is in love with you and that he got you for the ambassador only in the hope of enjoying you himself. The document in his possession proves that you behaved badly towards him. You are in his debt; discharge it and then call him a rascal if you have the conscience to do so. You need not trouble to weep, for I know the source of those tears; it is defiled."

"You know nothing about it. I love you and it is hard to have you treat me so."

"You love me? You have not taken the best way to prove it."

"As good a way as yours. You have behaved to me as if I were the vilest of prostitutes, and yesterday you seemed to think I was a brute

beast, the slave of my mother. You should have written to me in person and without the intervention of so vile an agent, I would have replied in the same way and you need not have been afraid that you would be deceived."

"Supposing I had written, what would your answer have been?"

"I would have put all money matters out of the question. I would have promised to content you on condition that you would come and court me for a fortnight without demanding the slightest favour. We would have lived a pleasant life, we would have gone to the theatre and to the parks. I would have fallen madly in love with you. Then I would have given myself up to you for love, and nothing but love. I am ashamed to say that hitherto I have given myself only out of mere complaisance. Unfortunate woman that I am! But I think Nature meant me to love and I thought, when I saw you, that my lucky star had sent you to England that I might know the bliss of true affection. Instead of this, you have only made me unhappy. You are the first man who has seen me weep; you have troubled my peace at home, for my mother shall never have the sum you promised her, were it for nothing but a kiss."

"I am sorry to have injured you, though I did not intend to do so; but I really don't know what I can do."

"Come and see us and keep your money, which I despise. If you love me, come and conquer me like a reasonable and not a brutal lover, and I will help you, for now you cannot doubt that I love you"

All this seemed so natural to me that I never dreamed it contained a trap. I was caught and I promised to do what she wished, but only for a fortnight. She confirmed her promise and her countenance became once more serene and calm. La Charpillon was a born actress.

She got up to go and, on my begging a kiss as a pledge of our reconciliation, she replied with a smile, the charm of which she well knew, that it would not do to begin by breaking the terms of our agreement, and she left me more in love than ever and full of repentance for my conduct.

CHAPTER 110

IF she had written all this to me, instead of coming and delivering it *vivâ voce*, it would probably have produced no effect; there would have been no tears, no ravishing features. She probably calculated all this, for women have a wonderful instinct in these matters.

That very evening I began my visits and judged from my welcome that my triumph was nigh at hand. But love fills our minds with idle visions and draws a veil over the truth.

The fortnight went by without my even kissing her hand and every time I came, I brought some expensive gift, which seemed cheap to me when I obtained such smiles of gratitude in exchange. Besides these presents, not a day passed without some excursion to the country or

party at the theatre, that fortnight must have cost me four hundred guineas at the least.

At last it came to an end and I asked her in the presence of her mother where she would spend the night with me, there or at my house. The mother said we would settle that after supper, and I made no objection, not liking to tell her that in my house the supper would be more succulent and a better prelude for the kind of exercise I expected to enjoy.

When we had supped, the mother took me aside and asked me to leave with the company and then come back. I obeyed, laughing to myself at this foolish mystery, and, when I came back, I found mother and daughter in the parlour, in which a bed had been laid on the floor.

Though I did not much care for this arrangement, I was too amorous to raise any objection at a moment when I thought my triumph was at hand; but I was astonished when the mother asked me if I would like to pay the hundred guineas in advance.

"Oh, fie!" exclaimed the girl. And her mother left the room and we locked the door.

My amorous feelings, so long pent up within my breast, were soon to find relief. I approached her with open arms, but she avoided my caress and gently begged me to get into bed while she prepared to follow me. I watched her undress with delight but, when she had finished, she put out the candles. I complained of this, but she said she could not sleep with the light shining on her. I began to suspect that I might have some difficulties thrown in my way to sharpen the pleasure, but I determined to be resigned and overcome them all.

When I felt her in the bed, I tried to clasp her in my arms, but found that she had wrapped herself up in her long nightgown; her arms were crossed and her head was buried in her chest. I entreated, scolded, cursed, but all in vain; she let me go on and answered not a word.

At first I thought it was a joke, but I soon found out my mistake; the veil fell from my eyes and I saw myself in my true colours, the degraded dupe of a vile prostitute.

Love easily becomes fury. I began to handle her roughly, but she resisted and did not speak. I tore her nightgown to rags, but I could not tear it entirely off her. My rage grew terrible, my hands became talons and I treated her with the utmost cruelty; but all for nothing. At last, with my hand on her throat, I felt tempted to strangle her; and then I knew it was time for me to go.

It was a dreadful night. I spoke to this monster of a woman in every manner and tone—with gentleness, with argument, rage, remonstrance, prayers, tears, abuse, but she resisted me for three hours without abandoning her painful position, in spite of the torments I made her endure.

At three o'clock in the morning, feeling my mind and body in a state of exhaustion, I got up and dressed myself by my sense of touch. I opened the parlour door and, finding the street door locked, I shook it till a servant came and let me out. I went home and got into bed, but excited nature refused me the sleep I so needed. I took a cup of

chocolate, but it would not stay on my stomach and soon after a shivering fit warned me that I was feverish. I continued to be ill till the next day and then the fever left me in a state of complete exhaustion.

I was obliged to keep to my bed for a few days, but I knew I should soon get my health again, my chief consolation was that at last I was cured. My shame had made me hate myself.

When I felt the fever coming on, I told my man not to let anybody come to see me and to place all my letters in my desk; for I wanted to be perfectly well before I troubled myself with anything.

On the fourth day I was better and I told Jarbe to give me my letters. I found one from Pauline, dated from Madrid, in which she informed me that Clairmont had saved her life while they were fording a river, and she had determined to keep him till she got to Lisbon and would then send him back by sea. I congratulated myself at the time on her resolve, but it was a fatal one for Clairmont and indirectly for me also. Four months after I heard that the ship in which he had sailed had been wrecked, and, as I never heard from him again, I could only conclude that my faithful servant had perished amidst the waves.

Amongst my London letters I found two from the infamous mother of the infamous Charpillon and one from the girl herself. The first of the mother's letters, written the very morning after that frightful night and when she did not know that I was ill, told me that her daughter was confined to her bed, covered with bruises from the blows I had given her, so that she would be obliged to institute legal proceedings against me. In the second letter she said she had heard I, too, was ill, and that she was sorry to hear it, her daughter having informed her that I had some reason for my anger, however, she would not fail to justify herself at the first opportunity. La Charpillon said in her letter that she knew she had done wrong and she wondered I had not killed her when I took her by the throat. She added that no doubt I had made up my mind to visit her no more, but she hoped I would allow her one interview, as she had an important communication to make to me. There was also a note from Goudar, saying that he wanted to speak to me and would come at noon. I gave orders that he should be admitted.

This curious individual began by astonishing me; he told me the whole story of what had taken place, the mother having been his informant.

"La Charpillon," he added, "has no fever but is covered with bruises. What grieves the old woman most is that she did not get the hundred guineas."

"She would have had them the next morning," I said, "if her daughter had been tractable."

"Her mother had made her swear that she would not be tractable, and you need not hope to possess her without the mother's consent."

"Why won't she consent?"

"Because she thinks you will abandon the girl as soon as you have enjoyed her."

"Possibly, but she would have received many valuable presents and now she is abandoned and has nothing."

"Have you made up your mind not to have anything more to do with her?"

"Quite."

"That's your wisest plan and I advise you to keep to it; nevertheless, I want to show you something which will surprise you. I will be back in a moment."

He returned, followed by a porter who brought up an armchair covered with a cloth. As soon as we were alone, Goudar took off the covering and asked me if I would buy it

"What should I do with it? It is not a very attractive piece of furniture."

"Nevertheless, the price of it is a hundred guineas."

"I would not give three."

"This armchair has five springs, which come into play all at once as soon as anyone sits down in it. Two springs catch the two arms and hold them tightly, two others separate the legs and the fifth lifts up the seat."

After this description Goudar sat down quite naturally in the chair and the springs came into play and forced him into the position of a woman in labour.

"Get the fair Charpillon to sit in this chair," said he, "and your business is done."

I could not help laughing at the contrivance, which struck me as at once ingenious and diabolical, but I could not make up my mind to avail myself of it.

"I won't buy it," said I, "but I shall be obliged if you will leave it here till to-morrow."

"I can't leave it here an hour unless you will buy it; the owner is waiting close by to hear your answer."

"Then take it away and come back to dinner."

He showed me how I was to release him from his ridiculous position, and then, after covering it up again, he called the porter and went away.

There could be no doubt as to the action of the machinery and it was no feeling of avarice which hindered me from buying the chair. As I have said, it seemed rather a diabolical idea and, besides, it might easily have sent me to the gallows. Furthermore, I should never have had the strength of mind to enjoy La Charpillon forcibly, especially by means of the wonderful chair, the mechanism of which would have frightened her out of her wits.

At dinner I told Goudar that La Charpillon had demanded an interview and that I had wished to keep the chair so as to show her that I could have her if I liked. I showed him the letter and he advised me to accede to the request, if only for curiosity's sake.

I was in no hurry to see the creature while the marks on her face and neck were still fresh, so I spent seven or eight days without making up

"No, but your tiger-like claws have left bruises all over me. Look here. No, you needn't be afraid that what you see may prove too seductive; besides, it will have no novelty for you."

So saying the wretched creature showed me her body, on which some livid marks were still visible.

Coward that I was! Why did I not look the other way? I will tell you. It was because she was so beautiful and because a woman's charms are unworthy of the name if they cannot silence reason. I affected to look only at the bruises, but it was an empty farce. I blush for myself; here was I conquered by a simple girl, ignorant of well-nigh everything. But she knew well enough that I was inhaling the poison at every pore. All at once, she adjusted her clothing and came and sat besides me, feeling sure that I would have liked her to continue the intoxicating spectacle.

However, I made an effort and said coldly that it was all her own fault.

"I know it is," said she, "for, if I had been tractable, as I ought to have been, you would have been loving instead of cruel. But repentance effaces sin and I am come to beg pardon. May I hope to obtain it?"

"Certainly; I am angry with you no longer, but I cannot forgive myself. Now go and trouble me no longer."

"I will if you like, but there is something you have not heard and I beg you will listen to me a moment."

"As I have nothing to do, you may say what you have to say; I will listen to you."

In spite of the coldness of my words, I was really profoundly touched and the worst of it was that I began to believe in the genuineness of her motives.

She might have relieved herself of what she had to say in a quarter of an hour but, by dint of tears, sighs, groans, digressions and so forth, she took two hours to tell me that her mother had made her swear to pass the night as she had done. She ended by saying that she would like to be mine as she had been M. Morosini's, to live with me and go out only under my escort, while I might allow her a monthly sum, which she would hand over to her mother, who would in that case leave her alone.

She dined with me and it was in the evening that she made this proposition—I suppose because she thought me ripe for another cheat. I told her it might be arranged but that I would prefer to settle with her mother and that she would see me at their house the following day. This seemed to surprise her.

It is possible that La Charpillon would have granted me any favour on that day and then there would have been no question of deception or resistance thereafter. Why did I not press her? Because sometimes love stupefies, instead of quickening, and because I had been in a way her judge and I thought it would be base of me to revenge myself

on her by satisfying my amorous desires; and possibly because I was a fool, as I have often been in the course of my existence.

She must have left me in a state of irritation and no doubt she registered a vow to revenge herself on me for the half-contemptuous way in which I had treated her.

Goudar was astonished when he heard of her visit and of the way in which I had spent the day. I begged him to get me a small furnished house and in the evening I went to see the infamous woman in her own home.

She was with her mother and I laid my proposal before them.

"Your daughter will have a house at Chelsea," said I to the mother, "where I can go and see her whenever I like, and also fifty guineas a month to do what she likes with."

"I don't care what you give her a month," she replied, "but, before I let her leave my house, she must give me the hundred guineas she was to have had when she slept with you."

"It is your fault that she didn't get them; however, to cut the matter short, she shall give them to you."

"And in the meanwhile, till you have found the house, I hope you will come to see me."

"Yes."

The next day Goudar showed me a pretty house at Chelsea and I took it, paying ten guineas, a month's rent, in advance, for which I received a receipt. In the afternoon I concluded the bargain with her mother, La Charpillon being present. The mother asked me to give her the hundred guineas and I did so, not fearing any treachery as nearly the whole of the girl's clothing was already at Chelsea.

In due course we went to our country house. La Charpillon liked the house immensely and after a short walk we supped merrily together. After supper we went to bed, but I found an obstacle which I had not expected. She resisted with such gentleness that I left her alone and went to sleep. I awoke sooner than she did, and found that I had been duped once more. . . . I left her alone but expressed my opinion of her in pretty strong terms. The impudent slut honoured me with a smile of disdain and then, beginning to dress, she proceeded to indulge in impertinent repartees. This made me angry and I gave her a box on the ears which stretched her at full length on the floor. She shrieked, stamped her feet and made a hideous uproar; the landlord came up and she began to speak to him in English, while the blood gushed from her nose.

The man fortunately spoke Italian and told me that she wanted to go away, and he advised me to let her do so or she might make it awkward for me and he himself would be obliged to testify against me.

"Tell her to begone as fast as she likes," said I, "and to keep out of my sight forever."

She finished dressing, staunched the blood and went off in a sedan-chair, while I remained petrified, feeling that I did not deserve to live and finding her conduct utterly outrageous and incomprehensible.

After an hour's consideration I decided on sending her back her trunk, and then I went home to bed, telling my servants I was not at home to anyone.

I spent twenty-four hours in pondering over my wrongs and at last my reason told me that the fault was mine; I despised myself. I was on the brink of suicide but happily I escaped that fate.

I was just going out when Goudar came up and made me go in with him, as he said he wanted to speak to me. After telling me that La Charpillon had come home with a swollen cheek, which prevented her showing herself, he advised me to abandon all claims on her or her mother or the latter would bring a false accusation against me which might cost me my life. Those who know England, and especially London, will not need to be informed as to the nature of this accusation, which is so easily brought in England; it will suffice to say that through it Sodom was overwhelmed.

"The mother has engaged me to mediate," said Goudar, "and, if you leave her alone, she will do you no harm."

I spent the day with him, foolishly complaining and telling him he could assure the mother I would take no proceedings against her but that I should like to know if she and her daughter had the courage to receive this assurance from my own lips.

"I will carry your message," said he, "but I pity you, for you are walking into their nets again and will end in utter ruin."

I fancied they would be ashamed to see me, but I was very much mistaken, for Goudar came back laughing and said the mother expressed a hope that I would always be a friend of the family. I think I would have been glad to have them refuse me, for I wanted never again to see that wretched woman who put me on such bad terms with myself, but I had not the strength to play the man. I called at Denmark Street that same evening and spent an hour without uttering a syllable. La Charpillon sat opposite to me, with eyes lowered over a piece of embroidery, while from time to time she pretended to wipe away a tear, as she let me see the ravages I had worked on her cheek.

I saw her every day and always in silence till the fatal mark had disappeared, but, during these mad visits the poison of desire was so instilled into my veins that, if she had known my state of mind, she might have despoiled me of all I possessed for a single favour.

When she was once more as beautiful as ever, I felt as if I must die if I did not hold her in my arms again, and I bought a magnificent pier glass and a splendid breakfast service of Dresden china and sent them to her with an amorous epistle which must have made her think me either the most extravagant or the most cowardly of men. She wrote in answer that she would expect me to sup with her in her room, in order that she might give me the tenderest proofs of her gratitude.

This letter sent me completely mad with joy and in a paroxysm of enthusiasm I resolved to surrender to her keeping the two bills of

exchange which Bolomé had given me and which gave me the power to send her mother and aunts to prison.

Full of the happiness that awaited me and enchanted with my own idiotic heroism, I went to see her that evening. She received me in the parlour with her mother and I was delighted to see the pier glass over the mantel and the china displayed on a little table. After a hundred words of love and tenderness she asked me to come up to her room and her mother wished us good night. I was overwhelmed with joy. After a delicate little supper I took out the bills of exchange and, after telling her their history, gave them up to her, to show that I had no intention of avenging myself on her mother and her aunts. I made her promise she would never part with them and she said she never would and, with many expressions of gratitude and wonder at my generosity, she locked them up with great care.

Then I thought it was time to give her some marks of my passion and I found her kind but, when I would have plucked the fruit, she clasped me in her arms, and began to weep bitterly.

I made an effort and asked her if she would be the same when we were in bed. She sighed and after a moment's pause replied, "Yes."

For a quarter of an hour I remained silent and motionless, as if petrified. At last I rose with apparent coolness and took my cloak and sword.

"What!" said she, "are you not going to spend the night with me?"

"No."

"But we shall see each other to-morrow?"

"I hope so. Good night."

I left that infernal abode and went home to bed.

CHAPTER III

At eight o'clock the next morning Jarbe told me that La Charpillon wanted to see me and had sent away her chair-man.

"Tell her I can't see her."

But I had hardly spoken when she came in and Jarbe went out. I addressed her with the utmost calmness and begged her to give me back the two bills of exchange I had placed in her hands the night before.

"I haven't got them about me, but why do you want me to return them to you?"

At this question I could contain myself no longer and launched a storm of abuse at her. It was an explosion which relieved nature and ended with an involuntary shower of tears. My infamous seductress stood as calmly as Innocence itself and, when I was so choked with sobs that I could not utter a word, she said she had been cruel only because her mother had made her swear an oath never to give herself to

anyone in her own house, and that she had come now only to convince me of her love, to give herself up to me without reserve and never to leave me any more if I wished it.

The reader who imagines that at these words rage gave place to love and that I hastened to obtain the prize, does not know the nature of the passion so well as the vile woman whose plaything I was. From hot love to hot anger is a short journey, but the return is slow and difficult. If there be only anger in a man's breast, it may be subdued by tenderness, by submission and affection; but when to anger is added a feeling of indignation at having been shamefully deceived, it is impossible to pass suddenly to thoughts of love and voluptuous enjoyment. With me, mere anger has never been of long duration, but when I am indignant, the only cure is forgetfulness.

In putting herself in my hands at such a moment, La Charpillon knew that my anger or my wounded pride would prevent me from taking her at her word; this kind of science was inborn in her. The instinct of women teaches them greater secrets than all the philosophy and research of men.

In the evening this monster left me, feigning to be disappointed and disconsolate and saying, "I hope you will come and see me again when you are once more yourself."

She had spent eight hours with me, during which time she had spoken only to deny my suppositions, which were perfectly true but which she could not afford to let pass. I had not taken anything all day in order that I might not be obliged to offer her anything or to eat with her.

After she had left me, I took some soup and then enjoyed a quiet sleep, for which I felt all the better. When I came to consider what had passed the day before, I concluded that La Charpillon was repentant, but I seemed no longer to care anything about her.

Here I may as well admit in all humility the change that love worked on me in London at the age of thirty-eight. Here closed the first act of my life; the second closed when I left Venice in 1783 and probably the third will close here, as I amuse myself by writing these *Memoirs*. Thus the three-act comedy will finish and, if it be hissed, as may possibly be the case, I shall not hear the sounds of disapproval. But as yet the reader has not seen the last, and I think the most interesting, scene of the first act.

I went for a walk in the Green Park and met Goudar. I was glad to see him, as the rogue was useful to me.

"I have just been at La Charpillon's," he began. "They were all in high spirits. I tried in vain to turn the conversation on you, but not a word would they utter."

"I despise them entirely," I rejoined. "I don't want to have anything more to do with them."

He told me I was quite right and advised me to persevere in my plan. I made him dine with me and then we went to the home of the well

known procuress, Mrs. Wells, where we saw the celebrated courtesan, Kitty Fisher, who was waiting for the Duke of — to take her to a ball. She was magnificently dressed and it is no exaggeration to say that she had on diamonds worth five hundred thousand francs. Goudar told me that, if I liked, I might have her then and there for ten guineas. I did not care to do so, however, for, though charming, she could speak only English and I liked to have all my senses, including that of hearing, gratified. When she had gone, Mrs. Wells told us that Kitty had eaten a bank note for a thousand guineas on a slice of bread and butter that very day. The note was a present from Sir — Akins, brother of the fair Mrs. Pitt. I do not know whether the bank thanked Kitty for the present she made it.

I spent an hour with a girl named Kennedy, a fair Irishwoman, who could speak a sort of French and behaved most extravagantly under the influence of champagne; but the image of La Charpillon was still before me, though I knew it not, and I could not enjoy anything. I went home feeling sad and ill pleased with myself. Common sense told me to drive all thoughts of that wretched woman out of my head, but something I called "honour" bade me not leave her the triumph of having won the two bills of exchange from me for nothing and made me determine to get them back by fair means or foul.

M. Malingan, at whose house I had made the acquaintance of this creature, came and asked me to dinner. He had asked me to dine with him several times before and I had always refused and now I would not accept until I had heard what guests he had invited. The names were all strange to me, so I agreed to come.

When I arrived, I found two young ladies from Liège, in one of whom I got interested directly. She introduced me to her husband and another young man, who seemed to be the cavalier of the other lady, her cousin.

The company pleased me and I was in hopes I should spend a happy day, but my evil genius brought La Charpillon to mar the feast. She came into the room in high glee and said to Malingan, "I would not have come to beg you to invite me to dinner if I had known that you would have so many guests and, if I am at all in the way, I will go."

Everybody welcomed her, myself excepted, for I was on the rack. To make matters worse, she was placed at my left hand. If she had come in before we sat down to dinner, I would have made some excuse and gone away but, as we had begun the soup, a sudden flight would have covered me with ridicule. I adopted the plan of not looking at her, reserving all my politeness for the lady on my right. When the meal was over, Malingan took me aside and swore to me that he had not invited La Charpillon, but I was not convinced, though I pretended to be for politeness' sake.

The two ladies from Liège and their cavaliers were embarking for Ostend in a few days and, in speaking of their departure, the one to whom I had taken a fancy said that she was sorry to be leaving Eng-

land without having seen Richmond. I begged her to give me the pleasure of showing it to her and, without waiting for an answer, I asked her husband and all the company to be present, excepting La Charpillon, whom I pretended not to see.

The invitation was accepted

"Two carriages," I said, "holding four each, will be ready at eight o'clock and we shall be exactly eight."

"No, nine, for I am coming," said La Charpillon, giving me an impudent stare, "and I hope you will not drive me away."

"No, that would be impolite, I will ride on ahead on horseback."

"Oh, not at all! Emilie shall sit on my lap."

Emilie was Malingan's daughter and, as everybody seemed to think the arrangement an extremely pleasant one, I had not the courage to resist. A few moments after I was obliged to leave the room for a few minutes and, when I came back, I met La Charpillon on the landing. She told me I had insulted her grievously and that, unless I made amends, I should feel her vengeance.

"You can begin your vengeance," I said, "by returning my bills of exchange."

"You shall have them to-morrow, but you had better try to make me forget the insult you have put on me."

I left the company in the evening, having arranged that we should all breakfast together the next day.

At eight o'clock the two carriages were ready and Malingan, his wife, his daughter and the two gentlemen got into the first vehicle and I had to get into the second with the ladies from Liège and La Charpillon, who seemed to have become very intimate with them. This made me ill-tempered and I sulked the whole way. We were an hour and a quarter on the journey. When we arrived, I ordered a good dinner and then we proceeded to view the gardens; the day was a beautiful one, though it was autumn.

Whilst we were talking, La Charpillon came up to me and said she wanted to return the bills in the same place in which I had given them to her. As we were at some distance from the others, I heaped her with abuse, reproaching her for her perfidy and corruption at an age when she should have retained some vestiges of innocence, calling her by the name she deserved, as I reminded her how often she had already prostituted herself; in short, I threatened her with my vengeance if she pushed me to extremities. But she was as cold as ice and opposed a calm front to the storm of invective I rained in her ears. However, as the other guests were at no great distance, she begged me to speak more softly, but they heard me and I was very glad of it.

At last we sat down to dinner and the wretched woman contrived to get a seat beside me and behaved all the while as if I were her lover or, at any rate, as if she loved me. She did not seem to care what people thought of my coldness, while I was in a rage, for the company must either have thought me a fool or else that she was making game of me.

After dinner we returned to the garden, and La Charpillon, determined to gain the victory, clung to my arm and after several turns led me towards the maze, where she wished to try her power. She made me sit down on the grass beside her and attacked me with passionate words and tender caresses and, by displaying the most enticing of her charms, she broke down my resistance, but I still do not know whether I was impelled by love or vengeance. I am inclined to think that my feelings were a compound of both passions.

But at the moment she looked the picture of voluptuous abandon. Her ardent eyes, her fiery cheeks, her wanton kisses, her swelling breast, her quick sighs, all made me think that she stood as much in need of defeat as I of victory; certainly I should not have judged that she was already calculating on resistance.

Thus I once more became tender and affectionate, I begged pardon for what I had said and done. Her fiery kisses replied to mine and I thought her glance and the soft pressure of her body were inviting me to gather the delicious fruit; but she gave a sudden movement and the chance was lost.

"What! you would deceive me again?"

"No, no, but we have done enough now. I promise to spend the night in your arms in your own house."

For a moment I lost my senses. I saw only the deceitful wretch who had profited by my foolish credulity so many times, and I resolved to enjoy or take vengeance. I held her down with my left arm and, drawing a small knife from my pocket, I opened it with my teeth and pricked her neck, threatening to kill her if she resisted me.

"Do your will," she said with perfect calm. "I only ask you to leave me my life but, after you have satisfied yourself, I will not leave this spot; I will not enter your carriage unless I am carried there by force and everybody shall know the reason."

This threat had no effect, for I had already got back my senses and I pitied myself for being degraded by a creature for whom I had the greatest contempt, in spite of the almost magical influence she had over me and the furious desires she knew how to kindle in my breast. I rose without a word and, taking my hat and cane, hastened to leave a place where unbridled passion had brought me to the brink of ruin.

My readers will scarcely believe me but it is, nevertheless, the exact truth when I say that the impudent creature hastened to rejoin me and took my arm again, as if nothing had happened. A girl of her age could not have played the part so well unless she had been already tried in a hundred battles. When we rejoined the company, I was asked if I were ill, while nobody noticed the slightest alteration in her.

When we got back to London, I excused myself on the plea of a bad headache and returned home.

The adventure had made a terrible impression on me and I saw that, if I did not avoid all intercourse with this girl, I should be brought to ruin. There was something about her I could not resist. I therefore

resolved to see her no more but, feeling ashamed of my weakness in giving her the bills of exchange, I wrote her mother a note requesting her to make her daughter return them or else I should be compelled to take harsh measures.

In the afternoon I received the following reply:

"Sir: I am exceedingly surprised at your addressing yourself to me about the bills you handed to my daughter. She tells me she will give you them back in person when you show more discretion and have learnt to respect her."

This impudent letter so enraged me that I forgot my vow of the morning. I put two pistols in my pocket and proceeded to the wretched woman's abode, to compel her to return me my bills if she did not wish to be soundly caned.

I took the pistols only to overawe the two male rascals who supped with them every evening. I was furious when I arrived but, when I passed by the door, I saw a handsome young hairdresser, who did La Charpillon's hair every Saturday evening, going into the house.

I did not want a stranger to be present at the scene I intended to make, so I waited at the corner of the street for the hairdresser to go. After I had waited half an hour, Rostaing and Couman, the two pimps of the house, came out and went away, much to my delight. I waited on; eleven struck and the handsome barber had not yet gone. A little before midnight a servant came out with a lamp—I suppose, to look for something that had fallen out of the window. I approached noiselessly, stepped in and opened the parlour door, which was close to the street, and saw . . . La Charpillon and the barber stretched on the sofa in an intimate embrace.

When the slut saw me, she gave a shriek and unhorsed her gallant, whom I caned soundly until he escaped in the confusion consequent on the servants, mother and aunts all rushing into the room. While this was going on, La Charpillon, half naked, remained crouched behind the sofa, trembling lest the blows should begin to descend on her. Then the three hags loosed their tongues on me like furies, but their abuse only increased my anger and I broke the pier glass, the china and the furniture and, as they still howled and shrieked, I roared out that, if they did not cease, I would break their heads. At this, they began to calm down.

I threw myself upon the fatal sofa exhausted and ordered the mother to return me the bills of exchange; but just then the watchman came in.

There is only one watchman to a district, which he perambulates all night with a lantern in one hand and a staff in the other. On these men the peace of the great city depends. I put three or four crowns into his hand and said "Go away" and, so saying, shut the door upon him. Then I sat down once more and again demanded the bills of exchange.

"I have not got them; my daughter keeps them."

"Call her."

The two maids said that, whilst I was breaking the china, she had escaped by the street door and that they did not know what had become of her. Then the mother and aunts began to shriek, weep and exclaim:

"My poor daughter alone in the streets of London at midnight! My dear niece, alas! alas! she is lost. Cursed be the hour when you came to England to make us all unhappy!"

My rage had evaporated and I trembled at the thought of this young, frightened girl running about the streets at such an hour.

"Go and look for her at the neighbour's houses," I said to the servants. "No doubt you will find her. When you tell me she is safe, you shall have a guinea apiece."

When the three Gorgons saw I was interested, their tears, complaints and invectives began again with renewed vigour, while I kept silence, as much as to say that they were in the right. I awaited the return of the servants with impatience and at last, at one o'clock, they came back with looks of despair.

"We have looked for her everywhere," said they, "but we can't find her."

I gave them the two guineas, as if they had succeeded, whilst I sat motionless, reflecting on the terrible consequences of my anger. How foolish is man when he is in love!

I was idiot enough to express my repentance to the three old cheats. I begged them to seek her everywhere when dawn appeared and to let me know of her return, that I might fall at her feet to beg pardon and never see her face again. I also promised to pay for all the damage I had done and to give them a full receipt for the bills of exchange. After these acts, done to the everlasting shame of my good sense, after this apology made to procuresses who laughed at me and my honour, I went home, promising two guineas to the servant who should bring me tidings that her young mistress had come home.

On leaving the house, I found the watchman at the door; he had been waiting to see me home. It was two o'clock. I threw myself on my bed and the six hours of sleep I obtained, though troubled by fearful dreams, probably saved me from madness.

At eight o'clock I heard a knock at the door and, on opening the window, found it was one of the servants from the house of my foes. I cried out to let her in and I breathed again on hearing that Miss Charpillon had just arrived in a sedan-chair in a pitiable condition and that she had been put to bed.

"I made haste to come and tell you," said the cunning maid, "not for the sake of your two guineas, but because I saw you were so unhappy."

This duped me directly. I gave her the two guineas and made her sit down on my bed, begging her to tell me all about her mistress's return. I did not dream that she had been schooled by my enemies; but, during the whole of this period, I was deprived of the right use of my reason.

The slut began by saying that her young mistress loved me and had deceived me only in accordance with her mother's orders.

"I know that," I said, "but where did she pass the night?"

"At a shop which she found open and where she was known from having bought various articles there. She is in bed with a fever and I am afraid it may have serious consequences, as she is in a specially sensitive condition."

"That's impossible."

"Oh, that proves nothing! The poor young man does not look into things very closely."

"But she is in love with him."

"I don't think so, though she often spends several hours in his company."

"And you say that she loves me!"

"Oh, that has nothing to do with it! It is only a whim of hers with the hairdresser."

"Tell her I am coming to pass the day beside her bed and bring me her reply."

"I will send the other girl, if you like."

"No, she speaks only English."

She went away and, as she had not returned by three o'clock, I decided on calling to hear how her young mistress was. I knocked at the door and one of the aunts appeared and begged me not to enter, as the two friends of the house were there in a fury against me and her niece lay in a delirium, crying out: "There's Seingalt! There's Seingalt! He's going to kill me. Help! Help!"

"For God's sake, sir, go away!"

I went home desperate, without the slightest suspicion that it was all a lie. I spent the whole day without eating anything; I could not swallow a mouthful. All night I kept awake and, though I took several glasses of strong waters, I could obtain no rest.

At nine o'clock the next morning I knocked at La Charpillon's door and the old aunt came and held it half-open, as before. She forbade me to enter, saying that her niece was still delirious, continually calling on me in her transports, and that the doctor had declared that, if the disease continued its course, she had not twenty-four hours to live. "The fright you gave her has upset her entire system; she is in a terrible state."

"Oh, fatal hairdresser!" I exclaimed.

"That was mere youthful folly; you should have pretended not to have seen anything."

"You think that possible, you old witch, do you? Do not let her lack for anything; take that."

With these words, I gave her a bank note for ten guineas and went away, like the fool I was. On my way back I met Goudar, who was quite frightened at my appearance. I begged him to go and see how La Charpillon really was and then to come and pass the rest of the

day with me. An hour after he came back and said he had found them all in tears and that the girl was in *extremis*.

"Did you see her?"

"No, they said she could see no one."

"Do you think it is all true?"

"I don't know what to think; but one of the maids, who tells me the truth as a rule, assured me that she had become mad because of the shock to her nervous system and she has also a fever and violent convulsions. It is all credible enough, for these are the usual results of a shock when a woman is in such a condition. The girl told me it was all your fault."

I then told him the whole story. He could only pity me but, when he heard that I had neither eaten nor slept for forty-eight hours, he said very wisely that, if I did not take care, I should lose my reason or my life. I knew it but I could find no remedy. He spent the day with me and did me good. As I could not eat, I drank a good deal and, not being able to sleep, I spent the night in striding up and down my room like a man beside himself.

On the third day, having heard nothing definite about the condition of La Charpillon, I went out at seven o'clock in the morning to call at her house. After I had waited a quarter of an hour in the street, the door was partly opened and I saw her mother all in tears, but she would not let me come in. She said her daughter was in the last agony. At the same instant a pale and thin old man came out, telling the mother that we must resign ourselves to the will of God. I asked the infamous old woman if he were the doctor.

"The doctor is no good now," said the old hypocrite, weeping anew. "He is a minister of the Gospel and there is another of them upstairs. My poor daughter! In another hour she will be no more."

I felt as if an icy hand had closed upon my heart. I burst into tears and left the woman, saying, "It is true that my hand dealt the blow, but her death lies at your door."

As I walked away, my knees seemed to give way under me and I entered my house determined to commit suicide.

With this fearful idea, I gave orders that I was not at home to anyone. As soon as I got to my room, I put my watches, rings, snuffboxes, purse and pocketbook in my strongbox and shut it up in my *escritoire*. I then wrote a letter to the Venetian ambassador, informing him that all my property was to go to M. de Bragadin after my death. I sealed the letter and put it with the casket and took the key with me, also silver to the amount of a few guineas. I took my pistols and went out with the firm intention of drowning myself in the Thames near the Tower of London.

Pondering over my plan with the utmost coolness, I went and bought as many lead bullets as my pockets would hold and as heavy as I could carry to the Tower, whither I intended to go on foot. On my way, I was strengthened in my purpose by the reflection, that if I continued to live, I should be tormented for the remainder of my

days by the pale shade of La Charpillon, reproaching me as her murderer I even congratulated myself on being able to carry out my purpose without any effort and I also felt a secret pride in my courage.

I walked slowly, on account of the enormous weight I bore, which would assure me a speedy passage to the bottom of the river.

By Westminster Bridge, my good fortune made me meet Sir Edgar —, a rich young Englishman who lived a careless and joyous life. I had made his acquaintance at Lord Pembroke's and he had dined with me several times. We were suited to one another, his conversation was agreeable and we had passed many pleasant hours together. I tried to avoid him, but he saw me and came up and took me by the arm in a friendly manner.

"Where are you going? Come with me, unless you are going to deliver some captive. Come along, we shall have a pleasant party."

"I can't come, my dear fellow; let me go."

"What's the matter? I hardly recognised you, you look so solemn."

"Nothing is the matter."

"Nothing? You should look at your face in the glass. Now I feel quite sure you are going to commit some foolish action."

"Not at all."

"It's no good denying it."

"I tell you there's nothing the matter with me. Good-bye, I shall see you again."

"It's no use; I won't leave you. Come along, we will walk together."

His eyes happening to fall on my breeches pocket, he noticed my pistol and, putting his hand on the other pocket, he felt the other pistol and said:

"You are going to fight a duel; I should like to see it. I won't interfere with the affair, but neither will I leave you."

I tried to put on a smile and assured him that he was mistaken and that I was only going for a walk to pass the time.

"Very good," said Edgar, "then I hope my society is as pleasant to you as yours is to me; I won't leave you. After we have taken a walk, we will go and dine at The Canon. I will get two girls to come and join us and we shall have a gay little party of four."

"My dear friend, you must excuse me; I am in a melancholy mood and want to be alone to get over it."

"You can be alone to-morrow if you like, but I am sure you will be all right in the next three hours. If not, I will share your madness. Where did you think of dining?"

"Nowhere; I have no appetite. I have been fasting for the last three days and I can only drink."

"Ah! I begin to see daylight. Something has crossed you and you are going to let it kill you, as it killed one of my brothers. I must see what can be done."

Edgar argued, insisted and joked, till at last I said to myself, "A day longer will not matter; I can do the deed when he leaves me and I shall have to bear with life only a few hours longer."

When Edgar heard that I had no particular object in crossing the bridge, he said that we had better turn back and I let myself be persuaded; but in half an hour I begged him to take me somewhere where I could wait for him, as I could not bear the weight of the lead any longer. I gave him my word of honour that I would meet him at The Canon.

As soon as I was alone, I emptied my pockets and put the leaden balls into a cupboard. Then I lay down and began to consider whether the good-natured young man would prevent me from committing suicide, as he had already made me postpone it. I reasoned, not as one who hoped, but rather as one who foresaw, that he would hinder me from shortening my days. Thus I waited in the tavern for the young Englishman, doubtful whether he was doing me a service or an injury.

He came back before long and was pleased to find me.

"I reckoned on your keeping your word," said he.

"You did not think I would break my word of honour."

"That's all right; I see you are on the way to recovery."

The sensible and cheerful talk of the young man did me good and I was beginning to feel better when the two young wantons, one of whom was a Frenchwoman, arrived in high spirits. They seemed intended for pleasure and Nature had dowered them with great attractions. I appreciated their charms but could not welcome them in the manner to which they were accustomed. They began to think me some poor valetudinarian but, though I was in torments, a feeling of vanity made me endeavour to behave tenderly. I gave them some cold kisses and begged Edgar to tell his fellow countrywoman that, if I were not three parts dead, I would prove how lovely and charming I thought her. They pitied me. A man who has spent three days without eating or sleeping is almost incapable of any voluptuous excitement, but mere words would not have convinced these priestesses of Venus if Edgar had not given them my name. I had a reputation and I saw that, when they heard who I was, they were full of respect. They all hoped that Bacchus and Comus would plead the cause of Love, and I let them talk, knowing that their hopes were in vain.

We had an English dinner, that is, a dinner without the essential course of soup, so I took only a few oysters and a draught of delicious wine, but I felt better and was entertained to see Edgar deftly busying himself with the two nymphs.

The young madcap suddenly proposed that the girls should dance a hornpipe in the costume of Mother Eve and they consented on condition that we adopt the dress of Father Adam and that blind musicians be summoned. I told them I would take off my clothes to oblige them but that I had no hopes of being able to imitate the seductive serpent. I was allowed to retain my dress on condition that, if I felt the prick of the flesh, I should immediately undress. I agreed to do so and the blind musicians were sent for and, while they tuned their instruments, toilettes were made and the orgy began.

It taught me some useful lessons. I learnt from it that *amorous*

pleasures are the effect and not the cause of gaiety. I sat gazing at three naked bodies of perfect grace and beauty, the dance and the music were ravishing and seductive, but nothing made any impression on me. After the dance was over, the French girl came up to ascertain whether I showed any signs of life, but, noting my hopeless condition, she pronounced me useless.

When it was all over, I begged Edgar to give the French girl four guineas and to pay my share of the expense, as I had very little money about me.

What would I have said if I had been told in the morning that, instead of drowning myself, I should take part in so pleasant an entertainment?

The debt I had contracted with the young Englishman made me resolve to put off my suicide to another day. After the nymphs were gone, I tried to get rid of Edgar, but in vain; he told me I was getting better, that the oysters I had taken showed my stomach was improving, and that, if I came with him to Ranelagh, I would be able to eat a good dinner the next day. I was weak and indifferent and let myself be persuaded and got into a coach with Edgar, in obedience to the Stoic maxim I had learnt in the happy days of my youth, *Sequere Deum*.

We entered the fine rotunda with our hats pulled down over our eyes and began to walk round and round, our arms behind our backs—a common custom in England, at least in those days.

A minuet was being danced and I was so attracted by a lady who danced extremely well that I waited for her to turn round. What made me notice her more particularly was that her dress and hat were exactly like those I had given to La Charpillon a few days before, but, as I believed the poor wretch to be dead or dying, the likeness did not inspire me with any suspicion. But the lady turned round, looked up and I saw—La Charpillon herself!

Edgar told me afterwards that at that moment he expected to see me fall to the ground in an epileptic fit, I trembled and shuddered so terribly.

However, I felt so sure she was ill that I could not believe my own eyes and the doubt brought me to my senses.

"She can't be La Charpillon," I said to myself. "She is some other girl like her and my enfeebled senses have led me astray." In the meanwhile the lady, intent on her dancing, did not glance in my direction, but I could afford to wait. At last she lifted her arms to make the curtsy at the end of the minuet; I stepped forward instinctively, as if I wished to dance with her; she looked me in the face and fled.

I constrained myself, but, now that there could be no doubt, my shuddering fit returned and I made haste to sit down. A cold sweat drenched my face and my whole body. Edgar advised me to take a cup of tea, but I begged him to leave me alone for a few moments. I was afraid I was at the point of death; I trembled all over and my heart beat so rapidly that I could not have stood up had I wished.

At last, instead of dying, I got new life. What a wonderful change

I experienced! Little by little, my peace of mind returned and I could enjoy the glitter of the multitudinous wax lights. By slow degrees I passed through all the shades of feeling between despair and an ecstasy of joy. My soul and mind were so astonished by the shock that I began to think I should never see Edgar again.

"This young man," I said to myself, "is my good genius, my guardian angel, my familiar spirit, who has taken the form of Edgar to restore me to my senses again."

I should certainly have persisted in this idea if my friend had not reappeared before very long.

Chance might have thrown him in the way of one of those seductive creatures who make one forget everything else, he might have left Ranelagh without having time to tell me he was going, and I should have gone back to London, feeling perfectly certain that I had seen only his earthly shape. Should I have been disabused if I had seen him a few days after? Possibly; but I am not sure of it. I have always had a hankering after superstition, of which I do not boast; I make the confession and leave the reader to judge me.

However, Edgar came back in high spirits, but anxious about me. He was surprised to find me full of animation and to hear me talking in a pleasant strain on the surrounding objects and persons.

"Why, you are laughing!" said he "Your sadness has departed, then?"

"Yes, good genius, but I am hungry and I want you to do me a favour, if you have no other pressing engagements."

"I am free till the day after to-morrow and till then you can do what you like with me."

"I owe my life to you but, to make your gift complete, I want you to spend this night and the whole of to-morrow with me."

"Done!"

"Then let us go home."

"With all my heart; come along."

I did not tell him anything while we were in the coach, and, when we got home, I found nothing new except a note from Goudar, which I put in my pocket, intending to reserve all business for the next day.

It was an hour after midnight. A good supper was served to us and we fell to; for my part, I devoured my food like a wild beast. Edgar congratulated me and we went to bed and I slept profoundly till noon. When I awoke, I breakfasted with Edgar and told him the whole story, which would have ended with my life if he had not met me on Westminster Bridge and he had not been keen enough to mark my condition. I took him to my room and showed him my *escritoire*, my strongbox and my will. I then opened Goudar's letter and read, "I am quite sure that the girl you know of is very far from dying, as she has gone to Ranelagh with Lord Grosvenor."

Although Edgar was a profligate, he was a sensible man and my story made him furious. He threw his arms around my neck and told me he would always think the day on which he rescued me from death

for so unworthy an object the happiest in his life. He could scarcely credit the infamy of La Charpillon and her mother. He told me I could have the mother arrested, though I did not have the bills of exchange, as her mother's letter acknowledging her daughter's possession of the bills was sufficient evidence.

Without informing him of my intention, I resolved that moment to have her arrested. Before we parted, we swore eternal friendship, but the reader will see before long what a penance the kind Englishman had to do for befriending me.

The next day I went to the attorney I had employed against Count Schwerin. After hearing my story, he said that I had an undoubted claim and could have the mother and the two aunts arrested.

Without losing time, I went before a magistrate, who took my sworn information and granted me a warrant. The same official who had arrested Schwerin took charge of the affair; but, as he did not know the women by sight, it was necessary that someone who did should go with him, for though he was certain of gaining admittance to their home and finding them in, there might be several other women present and he might not arrest the right ones.

As Goudar would not have undertaken the delicate task of pointing them out, I resolved on accompanying him myself.

I made an appointment with him at an hour when I knew they would all be in the parlour. He was to enter directly the door was opened, and I would come in at the same instant and point out the women he had to arrest. In England all judicial proceedings are conducted with the utmost punctuality and everything went off as I had arranged. The bailiff and his subaltern stepped into the parlour and I followed in their footsteps. I pointed out the mother and the two sisters and then made haste to escape, for the sight of La Charpillon dressed in black, standing by the hearth, made me shudder. I felt cured, certainly; but the wounds she had given me were not yet healed and I cannot say what might have happened if the Circe had had the presence of mind to throw her arms about my neck and beg for mercy.

As soon as I had seen these women in the hands of justice, I fled, tasting the sweets of vengeance, which are very great but yet a sign of unhappiness. The rage in which I had arrested the three procuresses and my terror in seeing the woman who had well-nigh killed me showed that I was not really cured. To be so, I would have had to flee from them and forget them altogether.

The next morning Goudar came and congratulated me on the bold step I had taken, which proved, he said, that I was either cured or more in love than ever. "I have just come from Denmark Street," he added, "and I saw only the grandmother, who was weeping bitterly, and an attorney, whom no doubt she was consulting."

"Then you have heard what happened?"

"Yes, I came up a minute after you had gone and stayed till the three old sluts made up their minds to go with the constable. They

resisted and said he ought to leave them till the next day, when they would be able to find someone to go their bail. The two bravos drew their swords to resist the law, but the other constable disarmed them one after the other and the three women were led off. La Charpillon wanted to accompany them, but it was judged best that she should remain at liberty in order to try to set them free."

Goudar concluded by saying he would go and see them in prison and, if I felt disposed to come to an arrangement, he would mediate between us. I told him that the only arrangement I would accept was the payment of the six thousand francs and that they might think themselves very lucky I did not insist on having my interest and thus repaying myself in part for the sums they had swindled out of me.

A fortnight elapsed without my hearing any more of the matter. La Charpillon dined with them every day and, in fact, kept them. It must have cost her a good deal, for they had two rooms, and their host, a veritable Charon, would not allow them to have their meals prepared outside the prison. Goudar told me that La Charpillon said she would never beg me to set them at liberty, even if she were sure that she had only to call on me to obtain anything she wanted. She thought me the most abominable of men. If I feel obliged to maintain that she was equally abominable, I must confess that on this occasion she showed more strength of mind than I; but, whereas I had acted out of passion, her misdeeds were calculated and directed solely toward her own interests.

For the whole of this fortnight I had sought Edgar in vain, but one morning he came to see me, looking in high spirits.

"Where have you been hiding all this time?" said I. "I have been looking for you everywhere."

"Love has been keeping me prisoner," said he. "I have some money for you."

"For me? From what quarter?"

"On behalf of the Anspersghers. Give me a receipt and the necessary declaration, for I am going to restore them myself to the poor Charpillon, who has been weeping for the last fortnight."

"I daresay she has, I have seen her weep myself; but I admire the way she has chosen as protector the man who did me the inestimable favour of freeing me from her chains. Does she know that I owe my life to you?"

"She knew only that I was with you at Ranelagh when you saw her dancing instead of dying, but I have told her the whole story since."

"No doubt she wants you to plead with me in her favour."

"By no means. She has just been telling me you are a monster of ingratitude, for she loved you and gave you several proofs of her affection; but now she hates you."

"Thank Heaven for that! The wretched woman! It's curious she should have selected you as her lover by way of taking vengeance on me. But take care; she will punish you!"

"It may be so, but anyhow it's a pleasant kind of punishment."

"I hope you may be happy; but look to yourself, she is a past mistress in all sorts of deceit."

Edgar counted me out two hundred and fifty guineas, for which I gave him a receipt and the declaration he required, and with these documents he went off in high spirits.

After this I surely could flatter myself that all was at an end between us, but I was mistaken.

Just about this time the Crown Prince of Brunswick, now the reigning duke, married the King of England's sister. The Common Council presented him with the freedom of the city and the Goldsmith's Company admitted him into their society and gave him a splendid golden box containing the documents which made him a citizen of London. The prince was the first gentleman in Europe and yet he did not disdain to add this new honour to a family illustrious for fourteen hundred years.

On this occasion Lady Harrington was the means of getting Madame Cornelis two hundred guineas. She lent her room in Soho Square to a confectioner, who gave a ball and supper to a thousand persons at three guineas each. I paid my three guineas and had the honour of standing up all the evening with six hundred others, for the tables seated only four hundred and there were several ladies who were unable to procure seats.

That evening I saw Lady Grafton seated beside the Duke of Cumberland. She wore her hair without any powder and all the other ladies were exclaiming about it and saying how very unbecoming it was. They could not anathematise the innovator too much, but in less than six months Lady Grafton's style of doing the hair became common, crossed the Channel and spread all over Europe, though it has been given another name. It is still in fashion and is the only method that can boast of having lasted thirty years, though unmercifully ridiculed at first.

The supper, for which the giver of the feast had received three thousand guineas, or sixty-five thousand francs, contained a most varied assortment of delicacies but, as I had not been dancing and did not feel taken with any of the ladies present, I left at one in the morning. It was Sunday, a day on which all persons save criminals are exempt from arrest, but nevertheless the following adventure befell me:

I was dressed magnificently and was driving home in my carriage, with my negro and another servant seated behind me; just as we entered Pall Mall, I heard a voice crying, "Good evening, Seingalt." I put my head out of the window to reply and in an instant the carriage was surrounded by men armed with pistols and one of them said, "In the King's name."

My servant asked what they wanted and they answered, "To take him to Newgate, for Sunday makes no difference to criminals."

"And what crime have I committed?"

"You will hear that in prison."

"My master has a right to know his crime before he goes to prison," said the negro.

"Yes, but the magistrate's abed."

The negro stuck to his position, however, and the people who had come up declared with one consent that he was in the right.

The head constable gave in and said he would take me to a house in the city.

"Then drive to the city," said I, "and have done with it."

We stopped before the house and I was placed in a large room on the ground floor, furnished solely with benches and long tables. My servant sent back the carriage and came to keep me company. The six constables said they could not leave me and told me I should send out for some meat and drink for them. I told my negro to give them what they wanted and to be as amicable with them as was possible.

As I had not committed any crime, I was quite at ease; I knew that my arrest must be the effect of a slander and, as I was aware that London justice was speedy and equitable, I thought I should soon be free. But I blamed myself for having transgressed the excellent maxim, never to answer anyone in the night time, for, if I had not done so, I should have been in my house and not in prison. The mistake, however, had been committed and there was nothing to be done but wait patiently. I amused myself by reflecting on my rapid passage from a numerous and exalted assemblage to the vile place I now occupied, though I was still dressed like a prince.

At last the day dawned and the keeper of the tavern came to see who the prisoner was. I could not help laughing at him when he saw me, for he immediately began to abuse the constables for not awaking him when I came; he had lost the guinea I would have paid for a private room. At last news was brought that the magistrate was sitting and that I must be arraigned before him.

A coach was summoned and I got into it, for, if I had dared to walk along the streets in my magnificent attire, the mob would have pelted me.

I went into the hall of justice and all eyes were at once attracted towards me; my silks and satins appeared the height of impertinence.

At the end of the room I saw a gentleman sitting in an armchair and concluded him to be my judge. I was right and the judge was blind. He wore a broad band round his head, passing over his eyes. A man beside me, guessing I was a foreigner, said in French, "Be of good courage; Mr. Fielding is a just and equitable magistrate."

I thanked the kindly unknown and was delighted to see before me this famous and estimable writer, whose works are an honour to the English nation.

When my turn came, the clerk of the court told Mr. Fielding my name—at least, so I presume.

"Signor Casanova," said he, in excellent Italian, "be kind enough to step forward. I wish to speak to you."

I was delighted to hear the accents of my native tongue and, making

my way through the press, I came up to the bar of the court and said, "*Eccomi, signore.*"

He continued to speak Italian and said, "Signor Casanova, of Venice, you are condemned to perpetual confinement in the prisons of His Majesty the King of Great."

"I should like to know, sir, for what crime I am condemned. Would you be kind enough to inform me as to its nature?"

"Your demand is a reasonable one, for with us no one is condemned without knowing the cause of his condemnation. Know, then, that the accusation (which is supported by two witnesses) charges you with intending to do grievous bodily harm to the person of a pretty girl and, as the aforesaid pretty girl goes in dread of you, the law decrees that you must be kept in prison for the rest of your days."

"Sir, this accusation is a groundless calumny; to that I will take oath! It is very possible, indeed, that the girl may fear my vengeance when she comes to consider her own conduct, but I can assure you I have had no such designs hitherto, and I don't think I ever shall."

"She has two witnesses."

"Then they are false ones. But may I ask your worship the name of my accuser?"

"Miss Charpillon."

"I thought as much; but I have never given her aught but proofs of my affection."

"Then you have no wish to do her any bodily harm?"

"Certainly not."

"Then I congratulate you. You can dine at home; but you must find two sureties. I must have an assurance from the mouths of two householders that you will never commit such a crime."

"Whom shall I find to do so?"

"Two well known Englishmen whose friendship you have gained and who know that you are incapable of such an action. Send for them and, if they arrive before I go to dinner, I will set you at liberty."

The constable took me back to the place where I had passed the night and I gave my servant the addresses of all the householders I recollected, bidding him explain my situation and be as quick as possible. They ought to have come before noon, but London is such a large place! They did not arrive and the magistrate went to dinner. I comforted myself with the thought that he would sit in the afternoon, but I had to put up with a disagreeable experience.

The chief constable, accompanied by an interpreter, came to say that I must go to Newgate. This is a prison where the most wretched and abject criminals are kept.

I signified to him that I was awaiting bail and that he could take me to Newgate in the evening if it did not come, but he only turned a deaf ear to my petition. The interpreter told me in a whisper that the fellow was certainly paid by the other side to put me to trouble, but that, if I was willing to bribe him, I could stay where I was.

"How much will he want?" I asked.

The interpreter took the constable aside and then told me that I could stay where I was for ten guineas.

"Then say that I should like to see Newgate."

A coach was summoned and I was taken away.

When I got to this abode of misery and despair, a Hell such as Dante might have conceived, a crowd of wretches, some of whom were to be hanged in the course of the week, greeted me by deriding my elegant attire. I did not answer them and they began to get angry and abuse me. The gaoler quieted them by saying that I was a foreigner and did not understand English, and then took me to a cell, informing me how much it would cost me and concerning the prison rules, as if he felt certain I would make a long stay. But in the course of half an hour the constable who had tried to get ten guineas out of me told me that bail had arrived and my carriage was at the door.

I thanked God from the bottom of my heart and soon found myself in the presence of the blind magistrate. My sureties were Pégu, my tailor, and Maisonneuve, my wine merchant, who said they were happy to be able to render me this slight service. In another part of the court I noticed the infamous Charpillon, Rostaing, Goudar and an attorney. The sight of them caused me no emotion and I contented myself with giving them a look of profound contempt.

My two sureties were informed of the amount in which they were to bail me and signed with a light heart and then the magistrate said politely, "Signor Casanova, please to sign your name for double the amount and you will then be a free man again."

I went towards the clerk's table and, on asking the sum I was to answer for, was informed that it was forty guineas, each of my sureties signing for twenty. I signed my name, telling Goudar that, if the magistrate could have seen La Charpillon, he would have valued her beauty at ten thousand guineas. I asked the names of the two witnesses and was told they were Rostaing and Bottarelli. I looked contemptuously at Rostaing, who was as pale as death, and averting my face from La Charpillon out of pity, I said, "The witnesses are worthy of the charge."

I saluted the judge with respect, although he could not see me, and asked the clerk if I had anything to pay. He replied in the negative and a dispute ensued between him and the attorney of my fair enemy, who was disgusted on hearing that she could not leave the court without paying the costs of my arrest.

Just as I was going, five or six well known Englishmen appeared to bail me out and were mortified to hear that they had come too late. They begged me to forgive the laws of the land, which are only too often converted into a means for the annoyance of foreigners.

At last, after one of the most tedious days I have ever spent, I returned home and went to bed, laughing at the experience I had undergone.

THUS ended the first act of the comedy; the second began the next morning. I was just getting up when I heard a noise at the street door and, on putting my head out of the window, I saw Pocchini, the scoundrel who had robbed me at Stuttgart, trying to get into my house. I cried out wrathfully that I would have nothing to do with him and slammed down my window.

A little later Goudar put in an appearance, bringing a copy of the Saint James's Chronicle containing a brief report of my arrest and of my being set at liberty under a bail of eighty guineas. My name and the lady's were disguised, but Rostaing and Bottarelli were set down plainly and the editor praised their conduct. I felt as if I should like to know Bottarelli and begged Goudar to take me to him. Martinelli, happening to call just then, said he would come with us.

We entered a wretched room on the third floor of a wretched house and there we beheld a picture of the greatest misery. A woman and five children clothed in rags formed the foreground; in the background was Bottarelli in an old dressing-gown, writing at a table worthy of Philemon and Baucis. He rose as we came in and the sight of him moved me to compassion. I said, "Do you know me, sir?"

"No, sir, I do not."

"I am Casanova, against whom you bore false witness, whom you tried to cast into Newgate."

"I am very sorry, but look around you and say what choice I have. I have no bread to give my children. I will do as much in your favour another time for nothing."

"Are you not afraid of the gallows?"

"No, for perjury is not punished with death; besides it is very difficult to prove."

"I have heard you are a poet."

"Yes. I have lengthened the *Didone* and abridged the *Demetrio*."

"You are a great poet, indeed!"

I felt more contempt than hatred for the rascal and gave his wife a guinea, for which she presented me with a wretched pamphlet by her husband, *The Secrets of the Freemasons Betrayed*. Bottarelli had been a monk in his native city, Pisa, and had fled to England with his wife, who had been a nun.

About this time M. de Saa surprised me by giving me a letter from my fair Portuguese, which confirmed the sad fate of poor Clairmont. Pauline said she was married to Count d'Al—. I was astonished to hear M. de Saa observe that he had known all about Pauline from the moment she arrived in London. That is the hobby of all diplomatists; they like people to believe they are omniscient. However, M. de Saa was a man of worth and talent and one could excuse this weakness as an incident inseparable from his profession, while most diplomatists only make themselves ridiculous by their assumption of universal knowledge.

M. de Saa had been almost as badly treated by La Charpillon as I, and we might have condoled with one another, but the subject was not mentioned.

A few days afterwards, as I was walking idly about, I passed a place called The Parrot Market. As I was amusing myself looking at these curious birds, I saw a fine young one in a cage and asked what language it spoke. They told me it was quite young and did not speak at all yet, so I bought it for ten guineas. I thought I would teach the bird a pretty speech, so I had the cage hung by my bed and repeated dozens of times every day the sentence, "La Charpillon is a bigger whore than her mother."

The only end I had in view was my private amusement and in a fortnight the bird had learnt the phrase with the utmost exactness and, every time it uttered the words, it accompanied them with a shriek of laughter which I had not taught it, but which made me laugh myself.

One day Goudar heard the bird and told me that, if I sent it to the Exchange, I would certainly get fifty guineas for it. I welcomed the idea and resolved to make the parrot the instrument of my vengeance against the woman who had treated me so badly. I secured myself from fear of the law, which is severe in such cases, by entrusting the bird to my Negro, to whom such merchandise was very suitable.

For the first two or three days, my parrot did not attract much attention, its observations being in French; but, as soon as those who knew the subject of them heard it, its audience increased and bids were made. Fifty guineas seemed rather too much, and my Negro wanted me to lower the price, but I would not agree, having fallen in love with this odd revenge.

In the course of a week, Goudar came to inform me of the effect the parrot's criticism had produced in the Charpillon family. As the vendor was my Negro, there could be no doubt as to whom it belonged to and who had been its master of languages. Goudar said that La Charpillon thought my revenge very ingenious but that the mother and aunts were furious. They had consulted several attorneys, who agreed in saying that a parrot could not be indicted for libel but that they could make me pay dearly for my jest if they could prove that I had been the bird's instructor. Goudar warned me to be careful of owing to the fact, as two witnesses would suffice to undo me.

The facility with which false witnesses may be procured in London is something dreadful. I have myself seen the word "Evidence" written in large characters in a window; this is as much as to say that false witnesses may be procured within.

The Saint James's Chronicle contained an article on my parrot in which the writer remarked that the ladies whom the bird insulted must be very poor and friendless or they would have bought it at once and thus prevented the thing from becoming the talk of the town. He added, "The teacher of the parrot has no doubt made the bird an

instrument of his vengeance and has shown very good taste in doing so; he ought to be an Englishman ”

I met my good friend Edgar and asked him why he had not bought the little slanderer.

“Because it delights all who know anything about the object of the slander,” said he.

At last Jarbe found a purchaser for fifty guineas and I heard afterwards that Lord Grosvenor had bought it to please La Charpillon, with whom he occasionally diverted himself.

Thus my relations with that girl came to an end. I have seen her since with the greatest indifference and without any renewal of the old pain.

One day, as I was going into Saint James’s Park, I saw two girls drinking milk in a room on the ground floor of a house. They called out to me but, not knowing them, I passed on my way. However, a young officer of my acquaintance came after me and said they were Italians and, being curious to see them, I retraced my steps.

When I entered the room, I was accosted by the scoundrelly Pocchini, dressed in a military uniform, who said he had the honour of introducing me to his daughters.

“Indeed,” said I, “I remember two other daughters of yours robbing me of a snuffbox and two watches in Stuttgart.”

“You lie!” said the impudent rascal.

I gave him no verbal answer but took up a glass of milk and flung it in his face and then left the room without more ado.

I was without my sword. The young officer who had brought me into the place followed me and told me I must not go without giving his friend satisfaction.

“Tell him to come out and do you escort him to the Green Park and I shall have the pleasure of giving him a caning in your presence, unless you would like to fight for him; if so, you must let me go home and get my sword. But do you know this man whom you call your friend?”

“No, but he is an officer and it is I that brought him here.”

“Very good, I will fight to the last drop of my blood; but I warn you, your friend is a thief. Go now; I will await you.”

In the course of a quarter of an hour they all came out, but only the Englishman and Pocchini followed me. There were a good many people about and I walked ahead of them till we reached Hyde Park. Pocchini attempted to speak to me, but I replied, lifting my cane, “Scoundrel, draw your sword, unless you want me to give you a thrashing!”

“I will never draw on a defenceless man.”

By way of reply, I gave him a blow with my cane, and the coward, instead of drawing his sword, began to cry out that I was trying to draw him into a fight. The Englishman burst out laughing and begged me to pardon his interference and then, taking me by the arm, said, “Come along, sir, I see you know the fellow.”

The coward went off in another direction, grumbling as he went.

On the way I informed the officer of the very good reasons I had for treating Pocchini as a rogue, and he agreed that I had been perfectly right. "Unfortunately," he added, "I am in love with one of his daughters."

When we were in the midst of Saint James's Park, we saw them and I could not help laughing when I noticed Goudar with one of them on each side.

"How did you come to know these ladies?" said I.

"Their father, the captain," he answered, "sold me some jewels; he introduced me to them."

"Where did you leave our father?" asked one.

"In Hyde Park, after giving him a caning."

"You served him quite right."

The young Englishman was indignant to hear them approving my ill treatment of their father and shook my hand and went away, swearing he would never be seen in their company again.

A whim of Goudar's, to which I was weak enough to yield, led me to dine with these miserable women in a tavern on the outskirts of London. The rascally Goudar got them drunk and in this state they told some terrible truths about their pretended father. He did not live with them but paid them nocturnal visits, in which he robbed them of all the money they had earned. He was their pander and made them rob their visitors, instructing them to pass it off as a joke if the theft was discovered. They gave him the stolen articles, but he never said what he did with them. I could not help laughing at this involuntary confession, remembering what Goudar had said about Pocchini selling him jewels.

After this wretched meal I went away, leaving to Goudar the duty of escorting the girls home. He came and saw me the next day and informed me that the girls had been arrested and taken to prison just as they were entering their house.

"I have just been to Pocchini's," said he, "but the landlord tells me he has not been in since yesterday."

The worthy and conscientious Goudar added that he would be sorry if he never saw the hapless fellow again, as he owed him ten guineas for a watch, which his daughters had probably stolen and which was well worth double.

Four days later I saw him again and he informed me that the rascal had left London with a servant maid, whom he had engaged at a registry office where any number of servants are always ready to take service with the first comer. The keeper of the office answers for their fidelity.

"The girl he has gone with is a pretty one, from what the man tells me, and they have taken ship from London. I am sorry he went away before I could pay him for the watch; I am dreading every moment to meet the individual from whom it was stolen."

I never heard what became of the girls, but Pocchini will reappear on the scene in due course.

I led a tranquil and orderly life, which I would have been pleased to continue for the remainder of my days; but circumstances and my destiny ordered it otherwise and against these it is not becoming in a Christian philosopher to complain. I went several times to see my daughter at her school and I also frequented the British Museum, where I met Dr. Mati. One day I found an Anglican minister with him and I asked the clergyman how many different sects there were in England.

"Sir," he replied in very tolerable Italian, "no one can give a positive answer to that question, for every week some sect dies and some new one is brought into being. All that is necessary is for a man of good faith or some rogue desirous of money or notoriety to stand in some frequented place and begin preaching. He explains some texts of the *Bible* in his own fashion and, if he pleases the gapers around him, they invite him to expound next Sunday, often in a tavern. He keeps the appointment and explains his new doctrines in a spirited manner. Then people begin to talk of him, he disputes with ministers of other sects, he and his followers give themselves a name and the thing is done. Thus, or almost thus, are all the numerous English sects produced."

About this time M. Stefano Guerra, a noble Venetian who was travelling with the leave of his Government, lost a case against an English painter who had executed a miniature painting of one of the prettiest ladies in London, Guerra having given a written promise to pay twenty-five guineas. When it was finished, Guerra did not like it and would not take it or pay the price. The Englishman, in accordance with the English custom, began by arresting his debtor; but Guerra was released on bail and brought the matter before the courts, which condemned him to pay the twenty-five guineas. He appealed, lost again and was in the end obliged to pay. Guerra contended that he had ordered a portrait, that a picture bearing no likeness to the lady in question was not a portrait and that he had, therefore, a right to refuse payment. The painter replied that it was a portrait, as it had been painted from life. The judgment was that the painter must live by his trade and that, as Guerra had given him painting to do, he must therefore provide him with the wherewithal to live, seeing that the artist swore he had done his best to catch the likeness. Everybody thought this sentence just and so did I; but I confess it also seemed rather hard, especially to Guerra, who, with costs, had to pay a hundred guineas for the miniature.

Malingan's daughter died just as her father received a public box on the ear from a nobleman who liked piquet but did not like players who corrected the caprices of Fortune. I gave the poor wretch the wherewithal to bury his daughter and leave England. He died on arriving at Liège, whence his wife wrote me that he had expired regretting his inability to pay his debts.

M. M— F— came to London as the representative of the canton of Berne and I called but was not received. I suspected he had got wind of the liberties I had taken with pretty Sara and did not want me to have an opportunity of renewing them. He was a somewhat eccentric man, so I did not take offence and had almost forgotten all about it when chance led me to the Marylebone Theatre one evening. The spectators sat at little tables and the charge for admittance was only a shilling, but everyone was expected to order something, were it only a pot of ale.

On going into the theatre, I chanced to sit down beside a girl whom I did not notice at first but, soon after I came in, she turned towards me and I beheld a ravishing profile which somehow seemed familiar; but I attributed that to the idea of perfect beauty that was graven on my soul. The more I looked at her, the surer I felt that I had never seen her before, though a smile of inexpressible slyness had begun to play about her lips. One of her gloves fell and I hastened to restore it to her, whereupon she thanked me in a few well chosen French sentences.

"Madame is not English, then?" said I, respectfully.

"No, sir, I am Swiss and a friend of yours."

At this, I looked round and on my right sat Madame M— F—, then her eldest daughter, then her husband. I got up and after bowing to the lady, for whom I had a great esteem, I saluted her husband, who replied only with a slight movement of the head. I asked Madame M— F— what her husband had against me and she said that Passano had written him telling some dreadful stories about me.

There was not time for me to explain and justify myself, so I devoted all my energies to the task of winning the daughter's good graces. In three years she had grown into a perfect beauty; she knew it and, by her blushes as she spoke to me, I knew she was thinking of what had passed between us in the presence of my housekeeper. I was anxious to find out whether she would acknowledge the fact or deny it altogether.

If she had denied it, I would have despised her. When I had seen her before, the blossom of her beauty was still in the bud, but now it had opened in all its splendour.

"Charming Sara," I said, "you have so enchanted me that I cannot help asking you a couple of questions which, if you value my peace of mind, you will answer. Do you remember what happened at Berne?"

"Yes."

"And do you repent of what you did?"

"No."

No man of delicacy could ask the third question, which may be guessed. I felt sure Sara would make me happy—nay, that she was even longing for the moment, and I gave reins to my ardour, determined to convince her that I was deserving of her love.

The waiter came to inquire if we had any orders and I begged Madame M— F— to allow me to offer her some oysters. After the

usual polite refusals she gave in and I profited by her acceptance to order all the delicacies of the season, including a hare (a great tidbit in London), champagne, choice liqueurs, larks, ortolans, truffles, sweetmeats—everything, in fact, that money could buy, and I was not at all surprised when the bill came to ten guineas. But I was very much surprised when M. M— F— who had eaten like a Turk and drunk like a Swiss, said calmly that it was too dear.

I begged him politely not to trouble himself about the cost and, by way of proving that I did not share his opinion, I gave the waiter half a guinea; the worthy man looked as if he wished that such customers came more often. The Swiss, who had been pale and gloomy enough a short while before, was rubicund and affable. Sara glanced at me and squeezed my hand; I had won!

When the play was over, M— F— asked me if I would allow him to call on me. I embraced him in reply. His servant came in and said he could not find a coach. Feeling rather surprised that he had not brought his carriage, I offered him the use of mine, telling my man to get me a sedan-chair.

"I accept your kind offer," said he, "on the condition that you allow me to occupy the chair."

I consented to this arrangement and took the mother and the two daughters with me in the carriage.

On the way Madame M— F— was very polite, gently putting on her husband the blame for the rudeness of which I had cause to complain. I said that I would avenge myself by paying an assiduous court to him in the future, but she pierced me to the heart by saying that they were on the point of departing. "We wanted to go the day after to-morrow," she said, "and to-morrow we shall have to give up our present rooms to their new occupants. A matter of business which my husband was not able to conclude will oblige us to stay another week and to-morrow we shall have the double task of moving and finding new apartments."

"Then you have not yet got new rooms?"

"No, but my husband says he is certain to find some to-morrow morning."

"Furnished, I suppose, for, as you intend to leave, you must have sold your furniture."

"Yes, and we shall have to pay the expenses of delivery to the buyer."

On hearing that M. M— F— was sure of finding lodgings, I was precluded from offering to accommodate them in my own house, as the lady might think I made the offer only because I was sure it would not be accepted.

When we got to the door of their house, we alighted and the mother begged me to come in. She and her husband slept on the second floor and the two girls on the third. Everything was upside down and, as Madame M— F— had something to say to the landlady, she asked me to go up with her daughters. It was cold and the room we entered

had no fire in it. The sister went into the adjoining room and I stayed with Sara. All of a sudden I clasped her to my breast and, feeling that her desires were as ardent as mine, I drew her with me to a sofa. But this happiness was short-lived; we heard a footstep on the stair. It was the father.

If M. M— F— had had any eyes, he must have found us out, for my face bore the marks of agitation, the nature of which it was easy to divine. We exchanged a few brief compliments, I shook his hand and disappeared. I was in such a state of excitement when I got home that I made up my mind to leave England and follow Sara to Switzerland. In the night I formed my plans and resolved to offer the family my house during the time they stayed in England, and, if necessary, to force them to accept my offer.

In the morning I hastened to call on M. M— F— and found him on his doorstep.

"I am going to try to get a couple of rooms," said he.

"They are already found," I replied. "My house is at your service and you must give me the preference. Let us go upstairs."

"Everybody is in bed."

"Never mind," said I, and we proceeded to go upstairs.

Madame M— F— apologised for being in bed. Her husband told her that I wanted to let them some rooms, but I laughed and said I desired that they accept my hospitality as that of a friend. After some polite refusals my offer was accepted and it was agreed that the whole family should take up their quarters with me that evening.

I went home and was giving the necessary orders when I was told that two young ladies wished to see me. I went down in person and was agreeably surprised to see Sara and her sister. I asked them to come in and Sara told me that the landlady would not let their belongings out of the house before her father paid a debt of forty guineas, although a city merchant had guaranteed to her it would be settled in a week. The long and short of it was that Sara's father had sent me a note and begged me to discount it.

I took the note and gave her a bank note for fifty pounds in exchange, telling her she could give me the change another time. She thanked me with great simplicity and went her way, leaving me delighted with the confidence she had placed in me.

The fact of M. M— F—'s needing forty guineas did not make me suspect that he was in straits, for I was disposed to look at everything through rose-coloured glasses and was only too happy to be of service to him and thereby prove that he was wrong to think so poorly of me.

I ate a light dinner in order to have a better appetite for supper with my Helvetian angel, and spent the afternoon writing letters. In the evening M. M— F—'s man came with three great trunks and innumerable cardboard boxes, telling me that the family would soon follow; but I awaited them in vain till nine o'clock. I began to get alarmed and went to their house, where I found them all in a state

of consternation. Two ill-looking fellows who were in the room roused my suspicions and, assuming a jovial and unconcerned air, I said, "I'll wager this is the work of some obdurate creditor."

"You are right," answered the father, "but I am sure of discharging the debt in five or six days and that was why I put off my departure."

"Then you were arrested after you had sent on your trunks."

"Just after."

"And what have you done?"

"I have sent for bail."

"Why did you not send for me?"

"Thank you; I am grateful for your kindness, but you are a foreigner and sureties have to be householders."

"But you ought to have told me what had happened, for I have an excellent supper ready for you and am dying of hunger."

It was possible that this debt might exceed my means, so I did not dare to offer to pay it. I took Sara aside and, on hearing that all this trouble was on account of a debt of a hundred and fifty pounds, I asked the bailiff whether we could go away and sup in peace if the debt was paid.

"Certainly," said he, showing me the bill of exchange.

I took out three bank notes of fifty pounds each and gave them to the man and, taking the bill, I said to the poor Swiss, "You can pay me the money before you leave England."

The whole family wept with joy and, after embracing them all, I summoned them to come and sup with me and forget life's unpleasant features.

We drove off to my house and had a merry supper, though the worthy mother could not quite throw off her sadness. After supper I took them to the rooms which had been prepared for them and with which they were delighted, and so I wished them good night, telling them they would be well entertained till their departure and that I hoped to follow them into Switzerland.

When I awoke the next day, I was in a happy frame of mind. On examining my desires, I found that they had grown too strong to be overcome, but I did not wish to overcome them. I loved Sara and I felt so certain of possessing her that I put all desires out of my mind; desires are born only of doubt and doubt torments the soul. Sara was mine; she had given herself to me out of pure love, without any shadow of self-interest.

I went to the father's room and found him engaged in opening his trunks. His wife looked sad, so I asked her if she were not well. She replied that her health was perfect, but that the thought of the sea voyage troubled her sorely. The father begged me to excuse him from breakfast, as he had business to attend to. The two young ladies came down and, after we had breakfasted, I asked the mother why they were unpacking their trunks so short a time before starting. She smiled and said that one trunk would be ample for all their possessions, as they had resolved to sell all superfluities, As I had seen some beautiful

dressess, fine linen and exquisite lace, I could not refrain from saying that it would be a great pity to sell cheaply what would have to be replaced dearly.

"You are right," she said, "but there is no pleasure so great as the consciousness of having paid one's debts."

"You must not sell anything," I replied emphatically, "for, as I am going to Switzerland with you, I can pay your debts and you shall repay me when you can."

At these words, astonishment was depicted on her face.

"I did not think you were speaking seriously," said she.

"Perfectly seriously, and here is the object of my vows"

With these words, I seized Sara's hand and covered it with kisses.

Sara blushed but said nothing and the mother looked kindly at us; but after a moment's silence she spoke at some length and with the utmost candour and wisdom. She gave me the circumstantial information as to the position of the family and her husband's restricted means, saying that under the circumstances he could not have avoided running into debt, but that he had made a mistake to bring them all with him to London.

"If he had been by himself," she said, "he could have lived here comfortably enough with only one servant; but with a family to provide for, the two thousand crowns per annum provided by the Government are quite insufficient. My old father has succeeded in persuading the State to discharge my husband's debts; but, to offset the extra expense, they will not employ a *chargé d'affaires*; a banker with the title of 'agent' will collect the interest on their English securities."

She ended by saying that she thought Sara was fortunate to have pleased me, but that she was not sure whether her husband would consent to the marriage.

The word "marriage" made Sara blush and I was pleased, though it was evident there would be difficulties in the way.

M. M— F— came back and told his wife that two clothes-dealers would come to purchase their superfluous clothing in the afternoon; but, after explaining my idea, I had not much trouble convincing him it would be better not to sell them and that he could become my debtor to the amount of two hundred pounds, on which he could pay interest till he was able to return me the capital. The agreement was written out the same day, but I did not mention the marriage question, as his wife had told me she would discuss it with him in private.

On the third day he came down by himself to talk with me.

"My wife," he began, "has told me of your intentions and I take it as a great honour, I assure you; but I cannot give you my Sara, as she is promised to M. de W— and family reasons prevent me from going back on my word. Besides, my old father, a strict Calvinist, would object to the difference in religion. He would never believe that his dear little grandchild would be happy with a Roman Catholic."

As a matter of fact, I was not at all displeased at what he said. I was certainly very fond of Sara, but the word "marriage" had a dis-

agreeable sound to me. I answered that circumstances might change in time and that in the meanwhile I should be quite content if he would allow me to be a friend of the family and take upon myself all the responsibility of the journey. He promised everything and assured me that he was delighted at his daughter having won my affection.

After this explanation I gave Sara as warm marks of my love as decency would allow in the presence of her father and mother, and I could see that all the girl thought of was love.

The fifth day I went up to her room and, finding her in bed, all the fires of passion flamed up in my breast, for since my first visit to their house I had not been alone with her. I threw myself upon her, covering her with kisses, and she showed herself affectionate but reserved. In vain I endeavoured to succeed; she opposed a gentle resistance to my efforts and, though she caressed me, she would not let me attain my end.

"Why, divine Sara," said I, "do you oppose my loving ecstasy?"

"Dearest, I entreat of you not to ask for any more than I am willing to give."

"Then you no longer love me?"

"Cruel man, I adore you!"

"Then why do you inflict on me a refusal after having once surrendered unreservedly?"

"I gave myself to you and we have both been happy and I think that should be enough for us."

"There must be some reason for this change. If you love me, dearest Sara, this renunciation must be hard for you to bear."

"I confess it, but nevertheless I feel it is my duty. I have made up my mind to subdue my passion from no weak motive but from a sense of what I owe to myself. I am under obligations to you and, if I were to repay with my body the debt I have contracted, I should be degraded in my own eyes. When we enjoyed each other before, only love was between us; there was no question of debit and credit. My heart is now the thrall of what I owe you, and to these debts it will not give what it gave so readily to love."

"That is a strange philosophy, Sara. Believe me, it is fallacious and opposed to your happiness as well as mine. These sophisms lead you astray and wound me to the heart. Give me some credit for delicacy of feeling and believe me, you owe me nothing."

"You must confess that, if you had not loved me, you would have done nothing for my father."

"I will certainly confess nothing of the kind. I would readily have done as much, and maybe more, out of regard for your worthy mother. It is quite possible indeed that, in doing this small service for your father, I had no thought of you at all."

"It might be so; but I do not believe it. Forgive me, dearest, but I cannot make up my mind to pay my debts in the way you wish."

"It seems to me that, if you are grateful to me, your love ought to be still more ardent."

"It cannot be more ardent than it is already."

"Do you know how grievously you make me suffer?"

"Alas! I suffer, too; but do not reproach me; let us continue to love each other."

This dialogue is not the hundredth part of what actually passed between us till dinner-time. The mother came in and, finding me seated at the foot of the daughter's bed, laughed and asked why I kept her in bed. I answered with perfect coolness that we had been so interested in our conversation that we had not noticed the flight of time.

I went to dress and, as I thought over the extraordinary change which had taken place in Sara, I resolved that it should not last long.

We dined together gaily and Sara and I behaved in all respects like two lovers. In the evening I took them to the Italian Opera, bringing them home to an excellent supper and going to bed with a general feeling of harmony.

The next morning I spent downtown, having accounts to settle with my bankers. I got some letters of exchange on Geneva and said farewell to the worthy Bosanquet. In the afternoon I got a coach for Madame M— F— to pay some farewell calls and I went to say goodbye to my daughter at school. The dear little girl burst into tears, saying that she would be lost without me and begging me not to forget her. I was deeply moved. Sophie begged me to go to see her mother before I left England and I decided to do so.

At supper we talked over our journey and M. M— F— agreed with me that it would be better to go by Dunkirk than Ostend. He had very little more business to attend to. His debts were paid and he said he thought he would have a matter of fifty guineas in his pockets at the journey's end, after paying a two-thirds share of all the travelling expenses. I had agreed to this, though I made up my mind at the same time not to let him see any of the accounts. I hoped to win Sara, in one way or another, when we got to Berne.

The next day, after breakfast, I took her hand in the presence of her mother and asked if she would give me her heart, provided I could obtain her father's consent at Berne.

"Your mother," I added, "has promised me hers will not be wanting."

At this, the mother got up and, saying that we had no doubt a good deal to talk over, she and her eldest daughter went out to pay some calls.

As soon as we were alone, Sara said she could not understand how I could have the slightest doubt as to whether her consent would be given.

"I have shown you how well I love you," said she, tenderly, "and I am sure I would be very happy as your wife. You may be sure that your wishes will be mine and that, however far you lead me, Switzerland will claim no thought of mine."

I pressed the amorous Sara to my bosom in a transport of delight which was shared by her but, as she saw me grow more ardent, she begged me to be moderate. Claspng me in her arms, she adjoined me

not to ask her for that which she was determined not to grant till she was mine by lawful wedlock.

"You will drive me to despair. Have you reflected that this resistance may cost me my life? Can you love and yet entertain this fatal prejudice? And yet, I am sure you love me, and pleasure, too."

"Yes, dearest one, I do love you, and amorous pleasure with you; but you must respect my delicacy."

My eyes were wet with tears and she was so affected that she fell fainting to the ground. I lifted her up and gently laid her on the bed. Her pallor alarmed me. I brought smelling-salts and rubbed her forehead with Savoy water and she soon opened her eyes and seemed delighted to find me calm again.

The thought of taking advantage of her helplessness would have horrified me. She sat up on the bed and said, "You have just given a true proof of the sincerity of your affection."

"Did you think, sweetheart, that I was vile enough to take advantage of your weakness? Could I enjoy a pleasure in which you had no share?"

"I did not think you would do such a thing, but I would not have resisted, though it is possible I should not have loved you afterwards."

"Sara, though you do not know it, you have a charm which will be my destruction."

After this I sat down sadly on the bed and abandoned myself to the most melancholy reflections, from which Sara did not endeavour to rouse me.

Her mother came in and asked, but not at all suspiciously, why she was on the bed. Sara told her the truth.

M. M— F— came in soon after and we dined together, but silently. What I had heard from the girl's lips had completely overwhelmed me. I saw I had nothing to hope for and that it was time for me to look to myself. Six weeks before, God had delivered me from my bondage to an infamous woman and now I was in danger of becoming the slave of an angel. Such were my reflections whilst Sara was unconscious, but I needed to consider the matter at leisure.

There was a sale of valuable articles in the business section of the city, the means taken for disposing of them being a lottery. Sara had read the announcement and I asked her with her mother and sister to come with me and take part in it. I had not much trouble in obtaining their consent and we found ourselves in distinguished company, among the persons present being the Countess of Harrington, Lady Stanhope and Emilie and her daughters. Emilie had a strange case before the courts. She had reported to the police that her husband had been robbed of six thousand pounds, though everyone said that she was herself the thief.

Madame M— F— did not buy a ticket, but she allowed me to buy tickets for her daughters, who were in high glee, since for ten or twelve guineas they got articles worth sixty.

Every day I was more taken with Sara but, feeling sure I would

obtain only slight favours from her, I thought it was time to come to an explanation. So, after supper I said that, as it was not certain that Sara could be my wife, I had determined not to accompany them to Berne. The father told me I was very wise and that I could still correspond with his daughter. Sara said nothing, but I could see she was much grieved.

I passed a dreadful night; such an experience was altogether new to me. I weighed Sara's reasons and they seemed to me merely frivolous, which drove me to conclude that my caresses had displeased her.

During the last three days I found myself more than once alone with her, but I was studiously moderate and she caressed me in a manner that would have given me bliss if I had not already obtained the one great favour. It was at this time I learnt the truth of the maxim that, if abstinence is sometimes the spur of love, it also has the opposite effect. Sara had brought my feelings to a pitch of gentle friendship, while an infamous prostitute like La Charpillon, who knew how to renew hope and yet grant nothing, in the long run inspired me with contempt and finally with hatred.

The family sailed for Ostend and I accompanied them as far as the mouth of the Thames. I gave Sara a letter for Madame de W— This was the name of the learned Hedvig, whom she did not know. They afterwards became sisters-in-law, as Sara married a brother of M. de W— and was happy with him.

Now, when I ask for news of old friends from persons coming from their country, I listen with interest and even pleasure; but the interest aroused in me is less than that awakened by some obscure incident of history. For our contemporaries, the companions of our youthful follies, we have a kind of contempt, somewhat similar to that which we entertain for ourselves. Four years ago, I wrote to Madame G— at Hamburg, and my letter began, "After a silence of twenty-one years . . ." She did not deign to reply and I was by no means displeased. We no longer care for one another and that is quite natural.

When my reader comes to know who Madame G— is, he will laugh, and with good reason. Two years ago I set out for Hamburg, but my good genius made me turn back to Dux; what had I to do in Hamburg?

After my guests were gone, I went to the Italian Opera at Covent Garden and met Goudar, who asked me if I would come to La Sartori's concert. He told me I would see a beautiful young Englishwoman there who spoke Italian. As I had just lost Sara, I did not much care about making new acquaintances, but still I was curious to see the young marvel. I indulged my curiosity and am glad to say that, instead of being amused, I was bored, though the young Englishwoman was rather pretty. A young Livonian who called himself Baron of Stenau seemed extremely interested in her. After supper she offered us tickets for the next concert, I took one for myself and one for Goudar, giving her two guineas, but the Livonian baron took fifty tickets and gave her a bank note for fifty guineas. I saw by this that he wanted to take the fortress by storm and I liked his way of doing it. I supposed him

to be rich, without caring to inquire into his means. He made advances to me and we became friends, the reader will see in due time what a disastrous acquaintance he was.

One day, as I was walking with Goudar in Hyde Park, he left me to speak to two ladies who seemed pretty. He was not long absent and said, when he rejoined me:

"A Hanoverian lady, a widow and mother of five daughters, came to England two months ago with her whole family. She lives close by and is occupied in soliciting compensation from the government for an injury that was done her by the passage of the Duke of Cumberland's army. The mother herself is sick and never leaves her bed; she sends her two eldest daughters to petition the government and they are the two young ladies you have just seen. They have not met with any success. The eldest daughter is twenty-two and the youngest fourteen; they are all pretty, speak English, French and German equally well and are always glad to see visitors. I have been to visit them myself but, as I gave them nothing, I do not care to go there alone a second time. If you like, however, I can introduce you."

"You stimulate my curiosity. Come along, but, if the one who pleases me is not complaisant, she shall have nothing."

"They will not even allow one to take them by the hand."

"They are Charpillons, I suppose."

"It looks like it. But you won't see any men there."

We were shown into a large room where I noticed three pretty girls and an evil-looking man. I began with the usual compliments, to which the girls replied politely but with an air of great sadness.

Goudar spoke to the man and then came to me, shrugging his shoulders and saying:

"We have come at a sad time. That man is a bailiff who has come to take the mother to prison if she can't pay her landlord the twenty guineas' rent she owes him, and they haven't a farthing. When the mother has been sent to prison, the landlord will no doubt turn the girls out of doors."

"They can live with their mother for nothing."

"Not at all. If they have the money, they can have their meals in prison, but no one is allowed to live in a prison except the prisoners."

I asked one of them where her sisters were.

"They have gone out to look for money, for the landlord won't accept any surety and we have nothing to sell."

"All this is very sad; what does your mother say?"

"She only weeps and yet, though she is ill and cannot leave her bed, they are going to take her to prison. By way of consolation, the landlord says he will have her carried there."

"It is very hard. But your looks please me, mademoiselle, and, if you will be kind, I may be able to extricate you from the difficulty."

"I do not know what you mean by 'kind'."

"Your mother will understand; go and ask her."

"Sir, you do not know us; we are good girls, and ladies of position, besides."

With these words, the young woman turned her back on me and began to weep again. The two others, who were quite as pretty, stood straight up and said not a word. Goudar whispered to me in Italian that, unless we did something for them, we would cut but a sorry figure; and I was cruel enough to go away without saying a word.

CHAPTER 113

As we were leaving the house, we met the two eldest sisters, who were coming home looking very sad. I was struck by their beauty and extremely surprised to hear myself greeted by one of them, who said, "It is M. le Chevalier de Seingalt."

"Himself, mademoiselle, and sorely grieved at your misfortune."

"Be kind enough to come in again for a moment."

"I am sorry to say that I have an important engagement."

"I will not keep you more than a quarter of an hour."

I could not refuse so small a favour and she employed the time in telling me how unfortunate they had been in Hanover, how they had come to London to obtain compensation, of their failure, their debts, the cruelty of the landlord, their mother's illness, the prison that awaited her, the likelihood of their being cast into the street and the cruelty of all their acquaintances.

"We have nothing to sell and all our resources consists of two shillings, which we shall have to spend on bread, on which we live."

"Who are your friends? How can they abandon you at such a time?"

She mentioned several names, among others, Lord Baltimore, Marquis Carraciolo, the Neapolitan ambassador, and Lord Pembroke.

"I can't believe it," said I, "for I know the two last noblemen to be both rich and generous. There must be some good reason for their conduct, since you are beautiful and for these gentlemen beauty is a bill to be honoured at sight."

"Yes, there is a reason. These rich noblemen abandon us with contempt. They refuse to take pity on us because we refuse to yield to their guilty passion."

"That is to say, they have taken a fancy to you and, as you will not have pity on them, they refuse to have pity on you. Is it not so?"

"That is exactly the situation."

"Then I think they are in the right."

"In the right?"

"Yes, I am quite of their opinion. We leave you to enjoy your sense of virtue and we spend our money in procuring those favours which you refuse us. Your misfortune really is your prettiness; if you were ugly, you would get twenty guineas fast enough. I would give you the money myself and the action would be put down to benevolence; whereas, as the case stands, if I were to give you anything, it would be

thought that I was actuated by the hope of favours to come and I should be laughed at, and deservedly, as a dupe."

I felt that this was the proper way to speak to the girl, whose eloquence in pleading her cause was simply wonderful.

She did not reply to my oration and I asked her how she came to know me.

"I saw you at Richmond with La Charpillon."

"She cost me two thousand guineas and I got nothing for my money, but I have profited by the lesson and in future I shall never pay in advance."

Just then her mother called her and, begging me to wait a moment, she went into her room and returned almost directly with the request that I come and speak to the invalid.

I found her sitting up in her bed, she looked about forty-five and still preserved traces of her former beauty, her countenance bore the imprint of sadness but had no marks of sickness whatsoever. Her brilliant and expressive eyes, her intellectual face and a suggestion of craftiness about her, all bade me be on my guard, and a sort of false likeness to La Charpillon's mother made me still more cautious and fortified me in my resolution to give no heed to the impulse of pity.

"Madame," I began, "what can I do for you?"

"Sir," she replied, "I heard the whole of your conversations with my daughters and you must confess that you did not talk to them in a very fatherly manner."

"Quite so, but the only rôle which I desire to play with them is that of lover, and a fatherly style would not have been suitable to the part. If I had the happiness of being their father, the case would be altered. What I said to your daughters is what I feel and what I think most likely to bring about the end I have in view. I have not the slightest pretence to virtue, but I adore the fair sex and now you and they know the road to my purse. If they wish to preserve their virtue, why, let them, nobody will trouble them and they on their side must not expect anything from men. Goodbye, madame, you may reckon on my never addressing your daughters again."

"Wait a moment, sir. My husband was the Count of — and you see that my daughters are of respectable birth."

"I cannot prove my respect more effectively than by never seeing them again."

"Have you no pity for our situation?"

"I pity you extremely and I would relieve you in an instant if your daughters were ugly but, as it is, they are pretty and that alters the case."

"What an argument!"

"It is a very strong one with me and I think I am the best judge of arguments which apply to myself. You need twenty guineas; well, you shall have them after one of your five countesses has spent a joyous night with me."

"What language to a woman of my station! Nobody ever dared speak to me in such a way before."

"Pardon me, but what is rank without a halfpenny? Allow me to retire."

"To-day we have only bread to eat."

"Well, certainly that is rather hard on countesses."

"You are laughing at the title, apparently."

"Yes, I am; but I don't want to offend you. If you like, I will stop to dinner and pay for all, yourself included."

"You are an eccentric individual. My girls are sad, for I am going to prison. You will find their company wearisome."

"That is my affair."

"You had much better give them the money you would spend on the dinner."

"No, madame. I must have at least the pleasures of sight and sound for my money. I will stay your arrest till to-morrow and afterwards Providence may possibly intervene on your behalf."

"The landlord will not wait "

"Leave me to deal with him."

I told Goudar to go and see what the man would take to send the bailiff away for twenty-four hours. He returned with the message that he must have a guinea and surety for the twenty guineas, in case the lodgers might take to flight before the next day.

My wine merchant lived close by. I told Goudar to wait for me; the matter was soon settled and the bailiff sent away and I told the five girls that they might take their ease for twenty-four hours more.

I informed Goudar of the steps I had taken and told him to go out and get a good dinner for eight people. He went on his errand and I summoned the girls to their mother's bedside and delighted them all by telling them that for the next twenty-four hours they were to make good cheer. They could not get over their surprise at the suddenness of the change I had worked in the house.

"But this is all I can do for you," said I to the mother. "Your daughters are charming and I have obtained a day's respite for you all without asking for anything in return; I shall dine, sup and pass the evening with them without asking so much as a single kiss but, if your ideas have not changed by to-morrow, you will be in exactly the same position as you were a few minutes ago and I shall not trouble you any more with my attentions."

"What do you mean by 'changing my ideas'?"

"I need not tell you, for you know perfectly well what I mean."

"My daughters shall never become prostitutes."

"I will proclaim their spotless chastity all over London—but I shall spend my guineas elsewhere."

"You are a cruel man."

"I confess I can be very cruel, but it is only when I don't meet with kindness."

Goudar came back and we returned to the young ladies' room, as the

mother did not like to show herself to my friend, telling me that I was the only man she had permitted to see her in bed during the whole time she had been in London.

Our English dinner was excellent in its way, but my chief pleasure was to see the voracity with which the girls devoured the meal. One would have thought they were savages devouring raw meat after a long fast. I got a case of excellent wine and made each of them drink a bottle but, not being accustomed to such indulgence, they became quite drunk. The mother had devoured the whole of the plentiful helpings I had sent in to her, and she had emptied a bottle of Burgundy, which she carried very well.

In spite of their intoxication, the girls were perfectly safe; I kept my word and Goudar did not take the slightest liberty. We had a pleasant supper and, after a bowl of punch, I left them, feeling in love with the whole bevy and very uncertain whether I should be able to show as brave a front the next day.

As we were going away, Goudar said that I was conducting the affair admirably but, if I made a single slip, I should be undone.

I saw the good sense of his advice and determined to show that I was as sharp as he.

The next day, feeling anxious to hear the results of the council which the mother had doubtless held with the daughters, I called at their house at ten o'clock. The two eldest sisters were out, endeavouring to beat up some more friends, and the three youngest rushed up to me as if they had been spaniels and I their master, but they would not even allow me to kiss them. I told them they made a mistake, and knocked at the mother's door. She told me to come in and thanked me for the happy day I had given them.

"Am I to withdraw my surety, countess?"

"You may do what you like, but I do not think you capable of such an action."

"You are mistaken. You have doubtless made a deep study of the human heart, but you either know little of the human mind or else think you have a larger share than any other person. All your daughters have inspired me with love but, were it a matter of life and death, I would not do a single thing for them or you until you had done me the only favour in your power. I leave you to your reflections, and more especially to your virtues."

She begged me to stay, but I did not even listen to her. I passed by the three charmers and, after telling my wine merchant to withdraw his security, I went in a furious mood to call on Lord Pembroke. As soon as I mentioned the Hanoverians, he burst out laughing and said these false innocents must be made to fulfil their occupation in a proper manner.

"They came whining to me yesterday," he proceeded, "and I not only would not give them anything, but I laughed them to scorn. They have gotten about twelve guineas out of me on false pretences; they are as cunning sluts as La Charpillon."

I told him what I had done the day before and what I intended to offer: twenty guineas for the first and as much for each of the others, but nothing to be paid in advance.

"I had the same idea myself but I begged off, and I don't think you'll succeed, as Lord Baltimore offered them forty apiece—that is, two hundred guineas in all—and the bargain fell through because they want the money to be paid in advance. They paid him a visit yesterday, but found him pitiless, for he has been taken in several times by them."

"We shall see what will happen when the mother is under lock and key; I'll bet we shall get them cheap."

I came home for dinner, and Goudar, who had just been at their house, reported that the bailiff would wait only till four o'clock, that the two eldest daughters had come back empty-handed and that they had been obliged to sell one of their dresses to buy a morsel of bread.

I felt certain that they would have recourse to me again, and I was right. We were at dessert when they put in an appearance. I made them sit down and the eldest sister exhausted her eloquence to persuade me to give them another day's grace.

"You will find me insensible," said I, "unless you are willing to adopt my plan. If you wish to hear it, kindly follow me into the next room."

She did so, leaving her sister with Goudar, and, making her sit down on a sofa beside me, I showed her twenty guineas, saying, "These are yours; but you know on what terms."

She rejected my offer with disdain and, thinking she might wish to salve her virtue by being attacked, I set to work; but, finding her resistance serious, I let her alone and begged her to leave my house immediately. She called to her sister and they both went out.

In the evening, as I was going to the play, I called on my wine merchant to hear the news. He told me that the mother had been taken to prison and the youngest daughter had gone with her, but he did not know what had become of the four others.

I went home feeling quite sad and almost reproaching myself for not having taken compassion on them; however, just as I was sitting down to supper, they appeared before me like four Magdalens. The eldest, who was the orator of the company, told me that their mother was in prison and that they would have to pass the night in the street if I did not take pity on them.

"You shall have rooms, beds and good and fires," said I, "but first let me see you eat."

Delight appeared on every countenance and I had numerous dishes brought for them. They ate eagerly but sadly and drank only water.

"Your melancholy and your abstinence displease me," said I to the eldest girl. "Go upstairs and you will find everything necessary for your comfort, but take care to be gone at seven in the morning and not to let me see your faces again."

They went up to the second floor without a word.

An hour afterwards, just as I was going to bed, the eldest girl came

into my room and said she wished to have a private interview with me. I told my negro to withdraw and asked her to explain herself.

"What will you do for us," said she, "if I consent to share your couch?"

"I will give you twenty guineas and I will lodge and board you as long as you give me satisfaction."

Without saying a word, she began to undress and got into bed. She was submissive and nothing more and did not give me so much as a kiss. At the end of a quarter of an hour I was disgusted with her and got up and, giving her a bank note for twenty guineas, told her to put on her clothes and go back to her room.

"You must all leave my house to-morrow," I said, "for I am ill-pleased with you. Instead of giving yourself up for love, you have prostituted yourself. I blush for you."

She obeyed mutely and I went to sleep in an ill humour.

About seven o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a hand shaking me gently. I opened my eyes and was surprised to see the second daughter.

"What do you want?" I said coldly.

"I want you to take pity on us and shelter us in your house for a few days longer. I will be very grateful. My sister has told me all; you are displeased with her but you must forgive her, for her heart is not her own. She is in love with an Italian who is in prison for debt."

"And I suppose you are in love with someone else?"

"No, I am not."

"Could you love me?"

She lowered her eyes and pressed my hand gently.

I drew her towards me and embraced her and, as I felt her kisses answer mine, I said, "You have conquered."

"My name is Victoire."

"I like it and I will prove the omen a true one."

Victoire was tender and passionate, which compensated me for my bad quarter of an hour of the night before.

When our exploits were over, I said:

"Dearest Victoire, I am wholly thine. Let your mother be brought here as soon as she is free. Here are twenty guineas for you."

She had not expected anything and the agreeable surprise put her in ecstasy; she could not speak but her heart was full of happiness. I, too, was happy and I believed that a great part of my happiness was caused by the knowledge that I had done a good deed. We are queer creatures, all of us, whether we are bad or good. From that moment I gave my servants orders to lay the table for eight persons every day and told them I was at home only to Goudar. I spent money madly, though I saw that I was within measurable distance of poverty.

At noon the mother came in a sedan-chair and went to bed directly. I went to see her and did not evince any surprise when she began to thank me for my noble generosity. She wanted me to suppose that she

thought I had given her daughters forty guineas for nothing, and I let her enjoy her hypocrisy.

In the evening I took them to Covent Garden, where the *castrato* Tenducci surprised me by introducing me to his wife, by whom he had two children. He laughed at people who said that a *castrato* could not procreate. Nature had made him a monster that he might remain a man; he was born triorchis, and, as only two of the seminal glands had been destroyed, the remaining one was sufficient to endow him with virility.

When I got back to my small seraglio, I supped merrily with the five nymphs and spent a delicious night with Victoire, who was overjoyed at having made my conquest. She told me that her sister's lover was a Neapolitan, calling himself Marquis de Petina, and that they were to get married as soon as he was out of prison. It seemed he was expecting remittances, and the mother would be delighted to see her daughter become a marchioness.

"How much does the marquis owe?"

"Twenty guineas."

"And the Neapolitan ambassador allows him to languish in prison for such a beggarly sum? I can't believe it."

"The ambassador won't have anything to do with him because he left Naples without leave of the government."

"Tell your sister that, if the ambassador assures me that her lover's name is really the Marquis de Petina, I will get him out of prison immediately."

I went out to invite my daughter and another pupil, of whom I was very fond, to dinner and on my way called on the Marquis of Caraccioli, an agreeable man whose acquaintance I had made in Turin. I found the famous Chevalier d'Eon at his house and I had no need for a private interview to make my inquiries about Petina.

"The young man is really what he professes to be," said the ambassador, "but I will neither receive him nor give any money till I hear from my government that he received leave to travel."

That was enough for me and I stayed there for an hour listening to d'Eon's amusing story.

D'Eon had quit the embassy on account of ten thousand francs which the Department of Foreign Affairs at Versailles had refused to allow him, though the money was his by right. He had placed himself under the protection of the English laws and, after securing two thousand subscribers at a guinea apiece, he had sent to press a huge quarto volume containing all the letters he had received from the French Government during the last five or six years.

About the same time a London banker had deposited the sum of twenty thousand guineas in the Bank of England, being ready to wager that sum that d'Eon was a woman. The bet was taken by a number of persons who had formed themselves into a kind of company for the purpose and the only way to decide it was that d'Eon should be examined in the presence of witnesses. The chevalier was offered half the

wager, but he laughed them to scorn. He said that such an examination would dishonour him, were he man or woman. Caraccioli said that it could dishonour him only if he were a woman, but I could not agree with this opinion. At the end of a year the bet was declared off, three years later he received his pardon from the King and appeared at Court in woman's dress, wearing the cross of Saint Louis.

Louis XV had always been aware of the chevalier's sex, but Cardinal Fleury had taught him that it became kings to be impenetrable, and Louis remained so all his life.

When I got home, I gave the eldest Hanoverian twenty guineas, telling her to fetch her marquis out of prison and bring him to dine with us, as I wanted to meet him. I thought she would die of joy.

The third sister, having taken counsel with Victoire and doubtless with her mother also, determined to earn twenty guineas for herself and she had not much trouble in doing so. She it was on whom Lord Pembroke had cast the eye of desire.

These five girls were like five dishes placed before a gourmand who enjoys them one after the other. To my fancy, the last was always the best. The third sister's name was Augusta.

The next Sunday I had a large number of guests. There were my daughter and her schoolmate, also Madame Cornelis and her son. Sophie was kissed and caressed by the Hanoverians, while I bestowed a hundred kisses on Miss Nancy Steyne, who was only thirteen but whose beauty worked sad havoc on my senses. My affection was supposed to be fatherly in its character but, alas, it was of a much more fleshly kind! This Miss Nancy, who seemed to me almost divine, was the daughter of a rich merchant. I said that I wanted to make her father's acquaintance, and she replied that her father proposed coming to call on me that very day. I was delighted to hear of the coincidence and gave orders that he should be shown in as soon as he came.

The poor marquis was the only sad figure in the company. He was young and well built, but thin and repulsively ugly. He thanked me for my kindness, saying that I had done a wise thing, as he felt sure the time would come when he would repay me a hundredfold.

I had given my daughter six guineas to buy a pelisse and she took me to my bedroom to show it to me. Her mother followed her to congratulate me on my seraglio.

At dinner gaiety reigned supreme. I sat between my daughter and Miss Nancy Steyne and felt happy. Mr. Steyne came in as we were at the oysters. He kissed his daughter with that tender affection which is more characteristic, I think, of English parents than of those of any other nation.

Mr. Steyne had dined, but he nevertheless ate a hundred scalloped oysters, in the preparation of which my cook was wonderfully expert; he also honoured the champagne with equal attention.

We spent three hours at the table and then proceeded to the third floor, where Sophie accompanied her mother's singing on the piano and young Cornelis displayed his flute-playing talents. Mr. Steyne swore

he had never been present at such a pleasant party in his life, adding that pleasure was forbidden fruit in England on Sundays and holidays. This convinced me that Steyne was an intelligent man, though his French was execrable. He left at seven, after giving a beautiful ring to my daughter, whom he escorted back to school with Miss Nancy.

The Marquis de Petina remarked to me rather stupidly that he did not know where to find a bed. I understood what he wanted but I told him he would easily find one with a little money. Taking his sweetheart aside, I gave her a guinea for him, begging her to tell him not to visit me again till he was invited.

When all the guests were gone, I led the five sisters to the mother's room. She was wonderfully well, eating, drinking and sleeping marvelously and never doing anything, not even reading or writing. She enjoyed the *dolce far niente* in all the force of the term. However, she told me she was always thinking of her children, who were happy in following the laws she laid down for them.

I could scarcely help laughing but I only said that, if these laws were the ones which her charming daughters followed, I thought them wiser than Solon's.

I drew Augusta on my lap and said, "Countess, allow me to kiss your delightful daughter."

Instead of giving me a direct answer, the old hypocrite began a long sermon on the lawfulness of the paternal kiss. All the time Augusta was lavishing on me secret but delicious endearments.

O tempora! O mores!

The next day I was standing at my window when the Marquis Caraccioli, who was passing by, greeted me and asked if he could come in. I bade him welcome and, summoning the eldest sister, told the ambassador that this young lady was going to marry the Marquis de Petina as soon as his remittances arrived.

He addressed himself to her as follows:

"Mademoiselle, it is true that your lover is really a marquis, but he is very poor and will never have any money; if he goes back to Naples, he will be imprisoned and, if released from the State prison, his creditors will put him in the Vittoria."

However, this salutary warning had no effect.

After the ambassador had taken his leave, I was dressing to take a ride when Augusta told me that, if I liked, Hippolyta, her sister, would go with me, as she could ride beautifully.

"That's amusing," said I. "Have her come down."

Hippolyta came down and begged me to let her ride with me, saying that she would do me credit.

"Certainly," said I, "but have you a man's riding-suit or a woman's costume?"

"No."

"Then we must put off the excursion till to-morrow."

I spent the day in seeing that a suit was made for her and I felt quite amorous when Pégu, the tailor, measured her for the breeches.

Everything was done in time and we had a charming ride, for she managed her horse with wonderful skill.

After an excellent supper, at which wine was not lacking, the happy Hippolyta accompanied Augusta into my room and helped her to undress. When she kissed her sister, I asked if she would not give me a kiss, too, and after some jesting Augusta changed the joke into earnest by bidding her come to bed beside me without taking the trouble to ask my leave, so sure did she feel of my consent.

Next day we went for a ride again in the afternoon, followed by my Negro, who was a skillful horseman himself. In Richmond Park Hippolyta's dexterity astonished me; she drew all eyes upon her. In the evening we came home well pleased with our day's ride and had a good supper.

As the meal proceeded, I noticed that Gabrielle, the youngest of all, looked sad and a little sulky. I asked her the reason and, with a little pout that became her childish face admirably, she replied, "Because I can ride horseback as well as my sister."

"Very good," said I. "You shall ride day after to-morrow." This put her in a good temper again.

Speaking of Hippolyta's skill, I asked her where she had learnt to ride. She simply burst out laughing. I asked her why she laughed and she said, "Why, because I never learnt anywhere; my only masters were courage and some natural skill."

"And has your sister learnt?"

"No," said Gabrielle, "but I can ride just as well."

I could scarcely believe it, for Hippolyta had seemed to float on her horse and her riding showed the utmost skill and experience. Hoping that her sister would vie with her, I said that I would take them out together, and the very idea made them both jump with joy.

Gabrielle was only fifteen and her figure, though not fully developed, was well marked and promised a perfect beauty by the time she was in her maturity. Full of grace and simplicity, she told her sisters she would like to accompany me to my room, and I readily accepted her offer, not caring whether the scheme had been concerted among them in advance.

As soon as we were alone, she told me she had never had a lover. Gabrielle was so charming that of the five I would have chosen her for life, had I been of a nature to make such a choice. On account of her I regretted to hear that the mother had made up her mind to leave. In the morning I gave her her fee of twenty guineas and a handsome ring as a mark of my special friendship and we spent the day getting ready our habits for the ride of the day following.

Gabrielle rode as if she had had two years in riding-school. We went along the streets at a walking pace but, as soon as we were in the open country, we broke into a furious gallop and kept it up till we got to Barnet, where we stopped to breakfast. We had done the journey in twenty-five minutes, although the distance is nearly ten miles. This may seem incredible, but the English horses are wonder-

fully swift and we were all well mounted. My two expert horsewomen looked ravishing. I adored them and I adored myself for making them so happy.

Just as we were remounting, who should arrive but Lord Pembroke! He was on his way to St. Alban's. He stopped his horse and admired the graceful riding of my two companions and, not recognising them immediately, he begged leave to pay his court to them. How I laughed to myself! At last he recognised them and congratulated me on my conquest, asking if I loved Hippolyta. I guessed his meaning and said I loved only Gabrielle.

"Very good," said he. "May I come to see you?"

"Certainly," I replied.

After a friendly handshake, we set out once more and were soon back in London.

Gabrielle was done up and went to bed directly; she slept on till the next morning without my disturbing her peaceful sleep and, when she awoke and found herself in my arms, she began to philosophise.

"How easy it is," said she, "to be happy when one is rich, and how sad it is to see happiness out of one's reach for lack of a little money! Yesterday I was the happiest of beings and why should I not be as happy all my days? I would gladly agree that my life should be short, provided it be a happy one."

I, too, philosophised but my reflections were sombre. I saw my resources all but exhausted and I began to meditate a journey to Lisbon. If my fortune had been inexhaustible, the Hanoverians might have held me in their silken fetters to the end of my days. It seemed to me as if I loved them more like a father than a lover, and the fact that I slept with them only added to the tenderness of the tie. I looked into Gabrielle's eyes and there I saw but love. How could such a love exist in her unless she were naturally virtuous and yet devoid of those prejudices which are instilled into us in our early years?

The next day Pembroke called and asked me to invite him to dinner. Augusta delighted him. He made proposals to her which excited her laughter, as he did not want to pay till after the event and she would not admit this condition. However, he gave her a bank note for ten guineas before he left and she accepted it with much grace. The day after he wrote her a letter of which I shall speak presently.

A few minutes after the nobleman had gone, the mother sent for me to come to her and, after paying an eloquent tribute to my virtues, my generosity and my unceasing kindness towards her family, she made the following proposal:

"As I feel sure you have all the love of a father for my daughters, I wish you to become their father in reality; I offer you my hand and heart; become my husband; you will be their father, their lord and mine. What do you say to this?"

I bit my lips hard and had great difficulty in restraining my inclination to laughter. Nevertheless, the amazement, the contempt and the indignation which this unparalleled piece of impudence aroused in me

soon brought me to myself. I perceived that this consummate hypocrite had counted on an abrupt refusal and had made this ridiculous offer only with the idea of convincing me that she was under the impression I had left her daughters as I found them and that the money I had spent on them was merely a sign of my tender and fatherly affection. Of course she knew perfectly well how the land lay, but she thought to justify herself by taking this step. She was aware that I could only look upon such a proposal as an insult, but she did not care for that.

I resolved to keep on the mask and I replied that her proposition was undoubtedly a very great honour for me but it was also a very important question, and so I begged her to allow me some time for consideration.

When I got back to my room, I found there the mistress of the wretched Marquis de Petina, who told me that her happiness depended on a certificate from the Neapolitan ambassador that her lover was really the person he professed to be. With this document he would be able to claim a sum of two hundred guineas and then they could both go to Naples and he would marry her there.

"He will easily obtain the royal pardon," said she. "You and you alone can help us in the matter and I commend myself to your kindness."

I promised to do all I could for her. In fact, I called on the ambassador, who made no objection to giving the required certificate. For the moment, my chilly conquest was perfectly happy but, though I saw she was very grateful to me, I did not ask her to prove her gratitude.

CHAPTER 114

LORD PEMBROKE wrote to Augusta, offering her fifty guineas a month for three years, with lodging, board, servants and carriage at St. Alban's, without reckoning what she might expect from his grateful affection if it were returned. Augusta translated the letter for me and asked my advice.

"I can't give you any counsel," said I, "in a matter which concerns only your own heart and your own interests."

She went up to her mother, who would come to no conclusion without first consulting me because, as she said, I was the wisest and most virtuous of men. I am afraid the reader will differ from her here, but I comfort myself by the thought that I agree with him. At last it was agreed that Augusta should accept the offer if Lord Pembroke would find a surety in the person of some reputable London merchant, for, with her beauty and numerous graces, she was sure to become Lady Pembroke before long. Indeed the mother said she was perfectly certain of it, for otherwise she could not have given her consent, as her daughters were countesses and too good to be any man's mistress.

The consequence was that Augusta wrote my lord a letter and in

three days it was all settled. The merchant duly signed the contract, at the foot of which I had the honour of inscribing my name as a witness, and then I took the merchant to the mother and he witnessed her cession of her daughter. She would not see Pembroke, but she kissed her daughter and held a private colloquy with her.

The day on which Augusta left my house was signalled by an event which I must set down.

The day after I had given the Marquis de Petina's future bride the required certificate, I had taken Gabrielle and Hippolyta out for a ride. When I got home, I found waiting for me a person calling himself Sir Frederick, who was said to be the son of Theodore, King of Corsica, who had died in London. This gentleman said he wished to speak to me in private and, when we were alone, he said he was aware of my acquaintance with the Marquis de Petina and, being on the eve of discounting a note of two hundred guineas for him, he wished to be informed whether it was likely that the marquis could meet the note when it fell due.

"It is important that I should be informed on that point," he added, "for the persons who are going to discount the note want me to put my signature to it."

"Sir," I replied, "I certainly am acquainted with the marquis, but I know nothing about his fortune. However, the Neapolitan ambassador assured me that he was the Marquis de Petina."

"If the persons who have the matter in hand should drop it, would you discount the note? You shall have it cheap."

"I never meddle with these speculations. Good day, Sir Frederick."

The next day Goudar came and said that a M. du Claude wanted to speak to me.

"Who is M. du Claude?"

"The famous Jesuit Lavalette, who was concerned in the great bankruptcy case which ruined the Society in France. He fled to England under a false name. I advise you to listen to him, for he must have plenty of money."

"A Jesuit and a bankrupt; that does not sound very well."

"Well, I have met him in good houses and, knowing that I was acquainted with you, he addressed himself to me. After all, you run no risk in listening to what he has to say."

"Well, you can take me to him; it will be easier to avoid any entanglement than if he came to see me."

Goudar went to Lavalette to prepare the way and in the afternoon took me to see him. I was well enough pleased to see the man whose rascality had destroyed the infamous work of many years. He welcomed me with great politeness and, as soon as we were alone, showed me a note of Petina's, saying:

"The young man wants me to discount it and says you can give me the necessary information."

I gave the reverend father the same answer as I had given the King of Corsica's son, and left him, angry with this Marquis of Misery,

who had given me so much needless trouble. I was minded to have done with him and resolved to let him know through his mistress that I would not be his reference, but I could not find an opportunity that day.

The next day I took my two nymphs for a ride and asked Pembroke to dinner. In vain we waited for Petina's mistress; she was nowhere to be found. At nine o'clock I got a letter from her, with a German letter enclosed for her mother. She said that, feeling certain her mother would not give her consent to her marriage, she had eloped with her lover, who had got together enough money to go to Naples, and, when they reached that town, he would marry her. She begged me to console her mother and make her listen to reason, as she had not gone off with an adventurer but with a man of rank, her equal. My lips curled into a smile of pity and contempt which made the three sisters curious. I showed them the letter I had just received and asked them to come with me to their mother.

"Not to-night," said Victoire. "This terrible news would keep her awake."

I took her advice and we supped together rather sadly.

I thought the poor girl was ruined for life and I reproached myself with being the cause of her misfortune, for, if I had not released the marquis from prison, this could never have happened. The Marquis Caraccioli had been right in saying that I had done a good deed but a foolish one. I consoled myself in the arms of my dear Gabrielle.

I had a painful scene with the mother the next morning. She cursed her daughter and her seducer and even blamed me. She wept and stormed alternately.

It is never of any use to try to convince people in distress that they are wrong, for one may only do harm, while, if they are left to themselves, they soon feel that they have been unjust and are grateful to the person who lets them exhaust their grief without any contradiction.

After this event I spent a happy fortnight in the society of Gabrielle, whom Hippolyta and Victoire looked on as my wife. She made my happiness and I made hers in all sorts of ways but especially by my fidelity, for I treated her sisters as if they had been my sisters, showing no recollection of the favours I had obtained from them and never taking the slightest liberties, for I knew that friendship between women will hardly brook amorous rivalry. I had bought them dresses and linen in abundance, they were well lodged and well fed, I took them to the theatre and to the country and the consequence was they all adored me and seemed to think that this manner of living could go on forever. Nevertheless, I was every day nearer and nearer to physical and financial bankruptcy. I had no more money and I had sold all my diamonds and precious stones. I still possessed my snuffboxes, my watches and numerous trifles, which I loved and had not the heart to sell, and indeed I should not have got the fifth part of what I gave for them. For a whole month I had not paid my cook or my wine

merchant, but I liked to feel that they trusted me. All I thought of was Gabrielle's love and of this I assured myself by a thousand delicacies and attentions.

This was my condition when one day Victoire came to me with sadness on her face and said that her mother had made up her mind to return to Hanover, as she had lost all hope of getting anything from the English Court.

"When does she intend to leave?"

"In three or four days."

"And is she going without telling me, as if she were leaving an inn after paying her bill?"

"On the contrary, she wishes to have a private talk with you."

I paid her a visit and she began by reproaching me tenderly for not coming to see her more often. She said that, as I had refused her hand, she would not run the risk of incurring censure or slander of any kind. "I thank you from my heart," she added, "for all the kindness you have shown my girls, and I am going to take away the three I have left, lest I lose them as I have lost the two eldest. If you like, you may come, too, and stay with us as long as you please in my pretty country house near the capital."

Of course I had to thank her and reply that my engagements did not allow me to accept her kind offer.

Three days after Victoire told me, as I was getting up, that they were going on board ship at three o'clock. Hippolyta and Gabrielle made me come for a ride, according to a promise I had given them the night before. The poor things enjoyed themselves, while I grieved bitterly, as was my habit when I had to separate from anyone I loved.

When we came home, I lay down on my bed, not taking any dinner and seeing nothing of the three sisters till they had made everything ready for the journey. I got up directly before they left, so as not to see the mother in my own room, and I saw her in hers just as she was about to be taken down into my carriage, which was in readiness at the door. The impudent creature expected me to give her some money for the journey, but, perceiving that I was not likely to bleed, she observed with involuntary sincerity that her purse contained the sum of a hundred and fifty guineas, which I had given to her daughters, and these daughters of hers were present and sobbed bitterly.

When they were gone, I closed my doors to everyone and spent three days in the melancholy occupation of making up my accounts. In the month I had spent with the Hanoverians, I had dissipated the whole of the sum resulting from the sale of the precious stones and I found that I was in debt to the amount of four hundred guineas. I resolved to go to Lisbon by sea and sold my diamond cross, six or seven gold snuffboxes (after removing the portraits), all my watches except one and two great trunks full of clothes. I then discharged my debts and found I was eighty guineas to the good, this being what remained of the fine fortune I had squandered away like a fool or a philosopher—or, perhaps, a little like each. I left my fine house

where I had lived so pleasantly and took a little room at a guinea a week. I still kept my Negro, as I had every reason to believe him to be a faithful servant.

After taking these measures, I wrote to M. de Bragadin, begging him to send me two hundred sequins.

Thus having made up my mind to leave London without owing a penny to anyone and under obligations to no man's purse, I awaited the bill of exchange from Venice. When it came, I resolved to bid farewell to all my friends and try my fortune in Lisbon, but such was not the fate which the fickle goddess had assigned to me.

A fortnight after the departure of the Hanoverians (it was the end of February, in the year 1764), my evil genius made me go to the Canon Tavern, where I usually dined in a room by myself. The table was laid and I was just going to sit down when Baron Stenau came in and begged me to have my dinner brought into the next room, where he and his mistress were dining.

"I thank you," said I, "for the solitary man grows weary of his own company."

I saw the Englishwoman I had met at Sartori's, the same to whom the baron had been so generous. She spoke Italian and was attractive in many ways, so I was well pleased to find myself opposite to her and we had a pleasant dinner.

After a fortnight's abstinence, it was not surprising that she inspired me with desires, but I concealed them nevertheless, for her lover seemed to respect her. I only allowed myself to tell the baron that I thought him the luckiest of men.

Towards the close of the dinner the girl noticed three dice on the mantel and picked them up, saying, "Let us have a wager of a guinea and spend it on oysters and champagne."

We could not refuse and the baron, having lost, called the waiter and gave his order.

While we were eating the oysters, she suggested that we should throw again to see who should pay for the dinner.

We did so and she lost.

I did not like my luck and, wishing to lose a couple of guineas, I offered to throw against the baron. He accepted and, to my annoyance, I won. He asked for his revenge and lost again.

"I don't want to win your money," said I. "I will give you your revenge up to a hundred guineas."

He seemed grateful and we went on playing and in less than half an hour he owed me a hundred guineas.

"Let us go on," said he.

"My dear baron, the luck's against you; you might lose a large sum of money. I really think we have had enough."

Without heeding my politeness, he swore against Fortune and against the favour I seemed to be showing him. Finally he got up and, taking his hat and cane, went out, saying, "I will pay you when I come back."

As soon as he had gone, the girl said, "I am sure you have been regarding me as your partner at play."

"If you guessed that, you will also have guessed that I think you charming."

"Yes, I noticed it."

"Are you angry with me?"

"Not in the least, provided my first guess was correct."

"You shall have the fifty guineas as soon as he has paid me."

"Very good, but the baron must know nothing about it."

"Of course not."

The bargain was scarcely struck before I began to show her how much I loved her. I had every reason to congratulate myself on her complaisance and thought this meeting a welcome gleam of light when all looked dark around me. We had to make haste, however, as the door was shut only with a catch. I had barely time to ascertain her address and the hour at which she could see me and whether I would have to be careful with her lover. She replied that the baron's fidelity was not of a character to make him very exacting. I put the address in my pocket and promised to pass a night with her.

The baron came in again and said, "I have been to a merchant to discount this bill of exchange and, though it is drawn on one of the best houses in Cadiz and made out by a good house in London, he would not have anything to do with it."

I took the bill and saw some millions mentioned on it, which astonished me.

The baron said with a laugh that the currency was Portuguese milreis and that they amounted to five hundred pounds sterling.

"If the signatures are known," said I, "I don't understand why the man won't discount it. Why don't you take it to your banker?"

"I haven't any. I came to England with a thousand gold pieces in my pocket and I have spent them all. As I have no letters of credit, I cannot pay you unless the bill is discounted. If you have any friends on the Exchange, however, you could get it done."

"If the names prove good ones, I will let you have the money tomorrow morning."

"Then I will endorse to your order."

He put his name to it and I promised to send him either the money or the bill before noon on the following day. He gave me his address and begged me to come and dine with him and so we parted.

The next day I went to Bosanquet, who told me that Mr. Leigh was looking out for bills of exchange on Cadiz, and I accordingly waited on him. He exclaimed that such paper was worth more than gold to him, and gave me five hundred and twenty guineas—of course, after I had endorsed it.

I called on the baron and gave him the money I had just received and he thanked me and gave me back the hundred guineas. Afterwards we had dinner and fell to talking of his mistress.

"Are you in love with her?" said I.

"No, I have plenty of others and, if you like her, you can have her for ten guineas."

I liked this way of putting it, though I had not the slightest idea of cheating the girl out of the sum I had promised her. On leaving the baron, I went to see her and, as soon as she heard that the baron had paid me, she ordered a delicious supper and treated me to a night that obliterated all my sorrows from my memory. In the morning, when I handed over the fifty guineas, she said that, as a reward for the way in which I had kept my promise, I could sup with her whenever I liked to spend six guineas. I promised to come and see her often.

The next morning I received a letter through the post, written in bad Italian and signed, "Your obedient godson, Daturi." This godson of mine was in prison for debt and begged me to give him a few shillings to buy some food.

I had nothing particular to do, the appellation of "godson" made me curious and so I went to the prison to see Daturi, of whose identity I had not the slightest idea. He was a fine young man of twenty; he did not know me, nor I him. I gave him his letter and, begging me to forgive him, he drew a paper from his pocket and showed me his certificate of baptism, on which I saw my own name inscribed beside his name and those of his father and mother, the parish of Venice, where he was born, and the church in which he was baptised; but still I racked my memory in vain, I could not recollect him.

"If you will listen to me," he said, "I can set you right; my mother has told me the story a hundred times."

"Go on," said I, "I will listen." And, as he told his story, I remembered who he was.

This young man, whom I had held at the font as the son of the actor Daturi, was possibly my own son. He had come to London with a troupe of jugglers to play the illustrious part of clown, or *pagliazzo*, but, having quarrelled with the company, he had lost his position and had got into debt to the extent of ten pounds sterling and for this debt he had been imprisoned. Without saying anything to him about my relations with his mother, I set him free on the spot, telling him to come to me every morning, as I would give him two shillings a day for his support.

A week after I had done this good work, I felt that I had caught the fearful disease from which the god Mercury had already delivered me three times, though with great danger and peril of my life. I had spent three nights with the fatal Englishwoman and the misfortune was most untimely under the circumstances. I was on the eve of a long sea voyage and, though Venus may have risen from the waves, sea air is by no means favourable to those on whom she has cast her malign aspect. I knew what to do and resolved to put myself under severe treatment without delay, knowing that I could recover my health in six weeks and, on arriving in Lisbon, make up for lost time.

I left my house, not with the intention of reproaching the Englishwoman, after the manner of fools, but rather of going to a good surgeon

with whom I could make an agreement to stay in his house till my cure was completed.

I had my trunks packed just as if I were going to leave London, excepting my linen, which I sent to my washerwoman, who lived at a distance of six miles from town and drove a great trade.

The very day I meant to change my lodging, a letter was handed to me. It was from Mr. Leigh and ran as follows:

"The bill of exchange I discounted for you is forgery, so please send me at your earliest convenience the five hundred and twenty guineas and, if the man who has cheated you will not reimburse the money, have him arrested. For Heaven's sake do not force me to have you arrested to-morrow and, whatever you do, make haste, for this may prove a hanging matter."

Fortunately, I was by myself when I received the letter. I fell on my bed and in a moment was covered with a cold sweat and trembled like a leaf. I saw the gallows before me, for nobody would lend me the money and they would not wait for my remittance from Venice to arrive.

My fit of shivering was followed by a burning fever. I loaded my pistols and went out, with the determination of blowing out Baron Stenau's brains or putting him under arrest if he did not give me the money. I reached his house and was informed that he had sailed for Lisbon four days before.

This Baron Stenau was a Livonian and four months after these events he was hanged in Lisbon. I anticipate this little event in his life only because I might possibly forget it when I come to my sojourn in Riga.

As soon as I heard he was gone, I saw there was no remedy and that I must save myself. I had only ten or twelve guineas left and this sum could not meet my needs. I went to Trèves, a Venetian Jew to whom I had a letter from Count Algarotti, the Venetian banker. I did not think of going to Bosanquet or Yanhel or Salvador, who might possibly have got wind of my trouble, whereas Trèves had no dealings with these great bankers and discounted a bill for a hundred sequins readily enough.

With the money in my pocket, I made my way to my lodging, while deadly fear dogged every step. Leigh had given me twenty-four hours' breathing time and I did not think him capable of breaking his word; still it would not do to count on it. I did not want to lose my linen nor three fine suits of clothes which were at my tailor's, yet I had need to act quickly.

I called in Jarbe and asked him whether he would prefer to take twenty guineas and his dismissal or continue in my service. I explained that he would have to wait in London for a week and join me at the place from which I would write to him.

"Sir," said he, "I should like to remain in your service and I will rejoin you wherever you please. When are you leaving?"

"In an hour's time, but say not a word or it will cost me my life."

"Why can't you take me with you?"

"Because I want you to bring my linen, which is at the wash, and my clothes which the tailor is making. I will give you sufficient money for the journey."

"I don't need anything. You can pay me what I have spent when I rejoin you. Wait a moment."

He went out and came back again directly and, holding out sixty guineas, said, "Take this, sir, I entreat you; my credit is good for as much more in case of need."

"I thank you, my good fellow, but I will not take your money; but be sure I shall not forget your fidelity."

My tailor lived close by and I called on him and, seeing that my clothes were not yet made up, I told him I should like to sell them and also the gold lace that was to be used in the trimming. He instantly gave me thirty guineas, which meant a gain to him of twenty-five per cent. I paid the week's rent of my lodging and, after bidding farewell to my Negro, I set out with Daturi. We slept at Rochester, as my strength would carry me no farther. I was in convulsions and had a sort of delirium. Daturi was the means of saving my life.

I had ordered post-horses to continue our journey and Daturi of his own authority sent them back and went for a doctor, who pronounced me to be in danger of an apoplectic fit and ordered a copious blood-letting, which restored my calm. Six hours later he pronounced me fit to travel. I got to Dover early in the morning and had only half an hour to wait, as the captain of the packet said the tide would not allow of any delay. The worthy sailor little knew how well his views suited mine. I used this half-hour in writing to Jarbe, telling him to rejoin me at Calais; and Mrs. Mercier, my landlady, to whom I addressed the letter, wrote me that she gave it to him with her own hands. However, Jarbe did not come. We shall hear more of this Negro in the course of two years.

We reached Calais in six hours and put up at the Bras d'Or, where I had left my post-chaise. I went straightway to bed and sent for a surgeon.

The fever and the virus in my blood put me in danger of my life and on the third day I was *in extremis*. A fourth blood-letting exhausted my strength and left me in a state of coma which lasted twenty-four hours. This was succeeded by a crisis which restored me to life again, but it was only by dint of the most careful treatment that I found myself able to continue my journey a fortnight later.

Weak in health, grieved at having been the innocent cause of the worthy Mr. Leigh's losing a large sum of money, humiliated by my flight from London, indignant with Jarbe and angry at being obliged to abandon my Portuguese project, I got into my post-chaise with Daturi, not knowing where to go or whether I had many more weeks to live.

I had written to Venice, asking M. de Bragadin to send the sum I have mentioned to Brussels, instead of London.

When I got to Dunkirk, the day after I left Calais, the first person

I saw was the merchant S—, husband of that Thérèse whom my readers may remember, the niece of Tiretta's mistress, with whom I had been in love seven years before. The worthy man recognised me and, seeing his astonishment at the change in my appearance, I told him I was recovering from a long illness, and then asked after his wife.

"She is wonderfully well," he answered, "and I hope we shall have the pleasure of having you to dinner to-morrow."

I said I wanted to be off at daybreak, but he would not hear of it and protested he would be quite hurt if I went away without seeing his wife and his three children. At last I appeased him by saying we would sup together.

My readers will remember that I had been on the point of marrying Thérèse, and this circumstance made me ashamed of presenting myself to her in such a sorry plight.

In a quarter of an hour the husband arrived with his wife and three children, the eldest of whom looked about six. After the usual greetings and tiresome inquiries after my health, Thérèse sent back the two younger children, rightly thinking that the eldest would be the only one in whom I would take any interest. He was a charming boy and, as he looked exactly like his mother, the worthy merchant had no doubts as to being its father.

I laughed to myself at finding my offspring thus scattered all over Europe. At supper Thérèse gave me news of Tiretta. He had entered the Dutch East Indian Company's service but, having been concerned in a revolt in Batavia, he had escaped the gallows only by flight. I had my own thoughts as to the similarity between his destiny and mine, but I did not reveal them. After all, it is an easy enough matter for an adventurous man, who does not look where he is going, to get hanged for a mere trifle.

The next day, when I got to Tournai, I saw some grooms walking fine horses up and down and I asked to whom they belonged.

"To the Comte de Saint-Germain, the adept, who has been here a month and never goes out. Everybody who passes through the place wants to see him, but he is not to be seen."

This was enough to give me the same desire, so I wrote him a letter expressing my wish to speak to him and asking him to name an hour. His reply, which I have preserved, ran as follows:

"The gravity of my occupation compels me to exclude everyone, but you are an exception. Come whenever you like, you will be shown in. You need not mention my name nor your own. I do not ask you to share my repast, for my food is not suitable to others—to you least of all if your appetite is what it used to be."

At nine o'clock I paid my call and found he had grown a beard two inches long. He had a score of retorts before him, full of liquids in various stages of digestion. He told me he was experimenting with colours for his own amusement and had established a hat factory for Count Cobenzl, the Austrian ambassador in Brussels. He added that

the count had given him only a hundred and fifty thousand florins, which were insufficient. Then we spoke of Madame d'Urfé.

"She poisoned herself," said he, "by taking too strong a dose of the Universal Medicine and her will shows that she thought herself to be with child. If she had come to me, I could have really made her so, though it is a difficult process and science has not advanced far enough for us to be able to guarantee the sex of the child."

When he heard the nature of my disease, he wanted me to stay three days at Tournai for him to give me fifteen pills, which would effectually cure me and restore me to perfect health. Then he showed me his *magistrum*, which he called *athoeter*. It was a white liquid contained in a well stoppered phial. He told me that this liquid was the universal spirit of nature and that, if the wax on the stopper was pricked ever so lightly, the whole of the contents would disappear. I begged him to make the experiment. He gave me the phial and a pin and I pricked the wax and lo! the phial was empty.

"It is very fine," said I, "but what good is all this?"

"I cannot tell you; that is my secret."

He wanted to astonish me before I went, and asked me if I had any money about me. I took out several pieces and put them on the table. He got up and, without saying what he was going to do, he took a burning coal and put it on a metal plate and placed a twelve-sols piece with a small black grain on the coal. He then blew it and in two minutes it seemed on fire.

"Wait a moment," said the alchemist, "let it get cool." And it cooled almost directly.

"Take it; it is yours," said he.

I took up the piece of money and found it had become gold. I felt perfectly certain he had smuggled my silver piece away and substituted a gold piece coated with silver. I did not care to tell him as much but, to let him see that I was not taken in, I said, "It is really very wonderful, but another time you should warn me what you are going to do, so that the operation might be attentively watched and the piece of money noted before being placed on the burning coal."

"Those who are capable of entertaining doubts of my art," said the rogue, "are not worthy to speak to me."

This was his usual style of arrogance, to which I was accustomed. That was the last time I saw this celebrated and learned impostor; he died at Schleswig six or seven years after. The piece of money he gave me was pure gold and two months after Field-Marshal Keith took such a fancy to it that I gave it to him.

I left Tournai the next morning and stopped at Brussels to await the answer to the letter which I had written to M. de Bragadin. Five days later I got the letter, with a bill of exchange for two hundred ducats.

I thought of staying in Brussels to get cured, but Daturi told me he had heard from a rope-dancer that his father and mother and the

whole family were at Brunswick, and he persuaded me to go there, assuring me I should be carefully looked after.

He had not much difficulty in getting me to go to Brunswick, as I was curious to see again the mother of my godson, so I started the same day. At Ruremonde I was so ill that I had to stop for thirty-six hours. At Wesel I wished to get rid of my post-chaise, for the horses of the country are not used to going between shafts, but what was my surprise to meet General Bekw— there!

After the usual compliments had passed and the general had condoled with me on my weak state of health, he said he would like to buy my chaise and exchange it for a commodious carriage in which I could travel all over Germany. The bargain was soon struck and the general advised me to stay at Wesel, where there was a clever young doctor from the University of Leyden who would understand my case better than the Brunswick physicians.

Nothing is easier than to influence a sick man, especially if he be in search of Fortune and knows not where to look for the fickle goddess. General Bekw—, who was in garrison at Wesel, sent for Dr. Pipers and was present at my confession and even at the examination.

I will not revolt my readers by describing the disgusting state in which I was; suffice it to say that I still shudder when I think of it.

The young doctor, who was gentleness personified, begged me to come and stay with him, promising that his mother and sisters would take the greatest care of me and that he would effect a radical cure in the course of six weeks if I would carry out all his directions. The general advised me strongly to stay with the doctor and I agreed all the more readily as I wished to have some amusement at Brunswick and not arrive there in a crippled condition. I therefore gave in, but the doctor would not hear of any agreement. He told me I could give him whatever I liked when I went away and he would certainly be satisfied. He took his leave to go and make my room ready and told me to come in an hour's time. I went to his house in a sedan-chair and held a handkerchief before my face, as I was ashamed that the young doctor's mother and sisters should see me in the state I was in.

As soon as I got to my room, Daturi undressed me and I went to bed.

CHAPTER 115

At supper-time, the doctor, his mother and one of his sisters came to see me. All of them bore the love of their kind written on their features; they assured me I would have all possible care at their hands. When the ladies were gone, the doctor explained his treatment. He said that he hoped, with mercurial pills and a brew of sweat-producing herbs, to free me of the poison which was swiftly bearing me toward the grave, but he warned me I must be very careful in my diet and must not exert myself in any way. I promised to abide by his directions and he said he would read me the newspaper himself twice a week to amuse me, and

by way of a beginning he informed me that the famous Pompadour was dead. .

Thus I was condemned to a state of perfect rest, but it was not the remedies nor the abstinence I dreaded most; I feared the effects of *ennui*; I thought I would die of it. No doubt the doctor saw the danger as well as I, for he asked me if I would mind his sister coming and working in my room occasionally with a few of her friends. I replied that, despite my shame of showing myself to young ladies in such a condition, I accepted her offer with delight. The sister was very grateful for what she was pleased to call my "kindness," for my room was the only one which looked on the street and, as everyone knows, girls are very fond of inspecting the passers-by. Unfortunately this arrangement turned out ill for Daturi. The poor young man had received only the education of a mountebank and it was tiresome for him to pass all his time in my company. When he saw that I had plenty of friends, he thought I could dispense with his society, and thought only of amusing himself. On the third day, towards the evening, he was brought home covered with bruises. He had been in the guard-room with the soldiers and, some quarrel having arisen, he had got a severe beating. He was in a pitiable state, all covered with blood and with three teeth missing. He told me the story with tears and begged me to take vengeance on his foes.

I sent my doctor to General Bekw—, who said that all he could do was to give the poor man a bed in the hospital. Daturi had no bones broken and in a few days he was quite well, so I sent him on to Brunswick with a passport from General Salomon. The loss of his teeth protected him from conscription; this, at any rate, was a good thing.

The young doctor's treatment was even more successful than he had expected, for in a month I was perfectly well again, though terribly thin. The worthy people of the house must have formed an idea of me not in the least like myself; I was thought to be the most patient of men and the sister and her young lady friends must have considered me modesty personified; but these virtues resulted only from my illness and my great depression. If you want to discover the character of a man, view him in health and freedom; a captive and in sickness, he is no longer the same man.

I gave a beautiful dress to the sister and twenty louis to the doctor and both seemed to me extremely satisfied.

On the eve of my departure I received a letter from Madame du Romain, who had heard I was in want from my friend Baletti and sent me a bill of exchange on Amsterdam for six hundred florins. She said I could repay her at my convenience, but she died before I was able to discharge the debt.

Having made up my mind to go to Brunswick, I could not resist the temptation to pass through Hanover, for, whenever I thought of Gabrielle, I loved her still. I did not wish to stop any length of time, for I was poor and had to be careful of my health. I wished only to pay her a flying visit on the estate which her mother had at Stocken, as she

had told me. I may also say that curiosity was a motive for this visit.

I decided to start at daybreak in my new carriage, but the fates had ordained it otherwise.

The English general wrote me a note, asking me to sup with him and telling me that some Italians would be present; this decided me to stay on, but I had to promise the doctor to observe strict temperance. My surprise may be imagined when I saw la Redegonde and her abominable mother. The mother did not recognise me at first, but Redegonde knew me directly and said, "Good heavens! how thin you have become!" I complimented her on her beauty and indeed she had improved wonderfully.

"I have just recovered from a dangerous illness," said I, "and am starting for Brunswick at daybreak to-morrow."

"So are we!" she exclaimed, looking at her mother.

The general, delighted to find that we knew each other, said we could travel together.

"Hardly, I think," I replied, "unless the worthy mother has changed her principles since I knew her."

"I am still the same," she said rather dryly; but I replied merely with a look of contempt.

The general held a bank at faro at a small table. There were several other ladies and some officers and the stakes were low. He offered me a place, but I excused myself, saying that I never played while on a journey.

At the end of the deal the general returned to the charge and said, "Really, chevalier, this maxim of yours is unsociable; you must play."

So saying, he drew several English bank notes from his pocketbook, telling me they were the same I had given him in London six months before.

"Take your revenge," he added. "There are four hundred pounds here."

"I don't want to lose as much as that," I replied, "but I will risk fifty pounds just to amuse you."

With this, I took out the bill of exchange Madame du Romain had sent me.

The general went on dealing and at the third hand I found I was fifty guineas to the good and with that I was satisfied. Directly afterwards supper was announced and we went into the dining-room.

Redegonde, who had learnt French admirably, kept everybody amused. She had been engaged by the Duke of Brunswick as second singer and was on her way from Brussels. She bemoaned her journey in the uncomfortable post-chaise and expressed a fear that she would be ill by the time she got to her journey's end.

"Why, there's the Chevalier Seingalt, all alone in a most comfortable carriage," said the general.

Redegonde smiled.

"How many people will your carriage hold?" the mother asked me.

"Only two," said the general, answering for me.

"Then it's out of the question, for I never let my daughter travel alone with anybody."

A general burst of laughter, in which Redegonde joined, seemed to embarrass the mother somewhat; but, like a good daughter, Redegonde explained that her mother was always afraid of her being assassinated.

The evening passed away in pleasant conversation and the young singer did not need much persuasion to seat herself at the piano, where she sang in a manner that won sincere applause.

When I wanted to go, the general begged me to come and take breakfast with him, saying that the post-chaise did not go till twelve and that this act of politeness was due to my young fellow countrywoman. Redegonde joined in, reproaching me with my behaviour in Turin and Florence, though she had nothing really to complain of. I gave in and, feeling that I needed rest, went to bed.

The next morning, at nine o'clock, I took leave of the worthy doctor and his family and walked to the general's, giving orders that my carriage be brought round as soon as it was ready.

In half an hour Redegonde and her mother arrived and I was astonished to see them accompanied by the brother who had been my servant in Florence.

When breakfast was over, my carriage stood at the door and I made my bow to the general and all the company, who were standing in the hall to see me off. Redegonde came down the steps with me and asked if my carriage was comfortable, and then got into it. I got in after her without the slightest premeditation and the postillion, seeing the carriage full, gave a crack with his whip and we were off, Redegonde shrieking with laughter. I was on the point of telling him to stop but, seeing her enjoyment of the drive, I held my tongue, only waiting for her to say, "I have had enough." But I waited in vain and we had gone over half a league before she said a word.

"I have laughed and am still laughing," said she, "when I think what my mother will say to this prank of mine. I had no such intention in getting into the carriage and I am sure you cannot have told the postillion to drive on."

"You may be quite sure of that."

"All the same, my mother will believe it to be a deeply laid plan and that strikes me as amusing."

"So it is; I am certainly quite satisfied. Now you are here, you had better come on with me to Brunswick; you will be more comfortable than in a villainous stage-coach."

"I should be delighted, but that would be pushing matters too far. No, we will stop at the first stage and wait for the coach."

"You may do so if you please, but you will excuse me from waiting."

"What! you would leave me all alone?"

"You know, dear Redegonde, that I have always loved you, and I am ready to take you with me to Brunswick; what more can I say?"

"If you love me, you will wait with me and restore me to my mother, who must be in despair."

"In spite of my devotion, I am afraid I cannot do so."

Instead of turning sulky, the young madcap began to laugh again and I determined she should come with me to Brunswick.

When we got to the end of the stage, there were no horses ready. I arranged matters with the postillion and, after baiting the horses, we set out once more. The roads were fearful and we did not come to the second posting-stage till nightfall.

We might have slept there but, not wishing to be caught up by the coach and lose my prize, I ordered fresh horses and we resumed our journey, in spite of Redegonde's tears and supplications. We travelled all night and reached Lippstadt in the early morning and, in spite of the unseasonableness of the hour, I ordered something to eat. Redegonde needed a rest, as indeed did I, but she had to give way when I said caressingly that we could sleep at Minden. Instead of scolding me, she began to smile and I saw she guessed what she had to expect; in fact, when we got to Minden, we had supper and then went to bed together as man and wife and stayed there five hours. She was quite kind and made me entreat her only for form's sake.

We got to Hanover and put up at an excellent inn, where we had a choice meal and where I found the waiter who was at the inn in Zurich when I waited on the ladies at table. Miss Chudleigh had dined there with the Duke of Kingston and they had gone on to Berlin.

We had a beautiful French bed in which to spend the night and in the morning we were awakened by the noise of the stage-coach. Redegonde, not wishing to be surprised in my arms, rang the bell and told the waiter by no means to admit the lady who would get out of the coach and ask to be shown in directly; but her precaution was vain, for, as the waiter went out, the mother and son came in and we were taken *in flagrante delicto*.

I told them to wait outside and, getting up in my shirt, I locked the door. The mother began to abuse me and her daughter and threatened me with criminal proceedings if I did not give her up. Redegonde, however, calmed her by telling her the story and she believed, or pretended to believe, it was all an accident; but she said, "That's all very well; but you can't deny, you little slut, that you have been sleeping with him."

"Oh, there's no harm in that, for you know, dear mamma, nobody does anything asleep."

Without giving her mother time to reply, she threw her arms round her neck and promised to go on with her in the coach.

After things had been thus settled, I dressed and gave them all a good breakfast and went on my way to Brunswick, where I arrived a few hours before them.

Redegonde had deprived me of my curiosity to see Gabrielle; besides, in the state I was in, my vanity would have suffered grievously. As soon as I had settled in a good inn, I sent for Daturi, who came immediately, elegantly dressed and very anxious to introduce to me a certain Signor Nicolini, a theatrical manager. This Nicolini understood his craft per-

fectly and was high in favour with the prince, whose mistress his daughter Anna was. He gave me a distinguished and cordial greeting and was very anxious I should stay with him, but I was able to escape the constraint of such an arrangement without giving him any offence. I accepted his offer to take my meals at his table, which was furnished by an excellent cook and surrounded by a distinguished company. Here was no gathering of men of title, with the cold and haughty manners of the Court; all were talented and such company, to my mind, was delightful.

I was not well and I was not rich, else I should have made a longer stay in Brunswick, which had its charms for me. But we will not anticipate, though, as old age steals on a man, he is never tired of dwelling again and again on the incidents of his past life, in spite of his desire to arrest the sands which run out so quickly.

The third day after my arrival at Brunswick, Redegonde, knowing that I was dining at Nicolini's, came there, too. Everybody had found out, somehow or other, that we had travelled from Wesel to Hanover together, and they were at liberty to draw whatever conclusions they pleased.

Two days later the Crown Prince arrived from Potsdam on a visit to his future bride, the daughter of the reigning duke, whom he married the year after.

The Court entertained in the most magnificent manner and the hereditary prince, now the reigning duke, honoured me with an invitation. I had met His Highness at an assembly in Soho Square the day after he had been made a London citizen.

It was twenty-two years since I had been in love with Daturi's mother. I was curious to see the ravages which time had worked on her, but I had reason to repent of my visit, for she had grown terribly ugly. She knew it herself and a blush of shame appeared on her features, which had once been fair.

The prince had an army of six thousand foot in good condition. This army was to be reviewed on a plain at a little distance from the town and I went to see the spectacle and was rewarded by having rain dripping down my back the whole time. Among the numerous spectators were many persons of fashion, ladies in handsome dresses and a good sprinkling of foreigners. I saw the Honourable Miss Chudleigh, who honoured me by addressing me and asked me, amongst other questions, how long it was since I had left London. She was dressed in Indian muslin and wore beneath it only a chemise of fine cambric and, by the time the rain had made her clothes cling to her body, she looked more than naked, but she did not evince any embarrassment. Most of the ladies sheltered themselves from the rain under elegant tents which had been erected.

The troops, who took no notice of the weather, executed their manœuvres and fired their muskets in a manner which seemed to satisfy good judges.

There was nothing further to hold me in Brunswick and I thought

of spending the summer in Berlin, which I concluded would be more amusing than a small, provincial town. Needing an overcoat, I bought the material from a Jew, who offered to discount bills of exchange for me if I had any. I had the bill which Madame du Romain had sent me and, finding that it would be convenient to have it discounted, I gave it to the Israelite, who cashed it, deducting commission at the ordinary rate of two per cent. The letter was payable to the order of the Chevalier de Seingalt and with that name I endorsed it.

I thought no more of the matter but early the next day the same Jew called on me and told me that I must either return him his money or give sureties for the amount till he had ascertained whether the bill was a forgery or not.

I was offended at this piece of impertinence and, feeling certain that the bill was a good one, I told the fellow that he might set his mind at rest and let me alone, as I would not give him any sureties.

"I must have either the money or the surety," said he, "and, if you refuse, I will have you arrested; your character is well known."

This was too much for me and, raising my cane, I gave him a blow on the head which he must have felt for many a long day. I then dressed and dined with Nicolini without thinking or speaking of this disagreeable incident.

The next day, as I was taking a walk outside the town walls, I met the prince on horseback, followed by a single groom. I bowed to him as he passed, but he came up to me and said, "You are leaving Brunswick, chevalier?"

"In two or three days, Your Highness."

"I heard it this morning from a Jew who came to lodge a complaint against you for beating him because he asked you to give him security for a bill of exchange which he was afraid of."

"My lord, I cannot answer for the effects of my indignation against a rascal who dared to come and insult me in my own house, but I do know that, if I had given him security, I should have impugned my own honour. The impertinent scoundrel threatened to have me arrested but I know that a just government rules here and not arbitrary power."

"You are right; it would be unjust to have you arrested, but he is afraid for his ducats."

"He need not be afraid, my lord, for the bill is drawn by a person of honour and of high station in society."

"I am delighted to hear it. The Jew said he would never have discounted the bill if you had not mentioned my name."

"That's a lie! Your Highness's name never passed my lips."

"He also says that you endorsed the bill with a false name."

"Then he lies again, for I signed myself Seingalt and that name is mine."

"In short, it is a case of a Jew who has been beaten and is afraid of being duped. I pity the miserable fellow and must see what I can do to prevent his holding you here till he learns the fate of the bill at Amsterdam. As I have not the slightest doubt as to the goodness of the

bill, I will take it up myself, and this very morning; thus you will be able to leave when you like. Farewell, chevalier! I wish you a pleasant journey."

With this compliment, the prince left me without giving me time to answer him. I might have felt inclined to tell him that, by taking up the bill, he would give the Jew and everyone else to understand that it was a favour done to me, to the great hurt of my honour, and that consequently I should be obliged by his doing nothing of the kind. But, though the prince was a man of generosity and magnanimity, he was deficient in that delicate quality which we call "tact." This defect, common amongst princes, arises from their upbringing, which places them above the politeness considered necessary in ordinary mortals.

He could not have treated me worse than he did if he had been certain of my dishonesty and wished me to understand that I was forgiven and that he would bear all the consequences of my misdemeanour. With this idea in my head, I said to myself:

"Perhaps, indeed, this is exactly what the prince does think. Is it the Jew or me that he pities? If the latter, I think I must give him a lesson, though I do not wish to cause him any humiliation."

Feeling deeply humiliated myself and pondering on my position, I walked away, directing my attention especially to the duke's concluding words. I thought his wish for a pleasant journey supremely out of place under the circumstances, in the mouth of one who enjoyed almost absolute power. It was equivalent to an order to leave town and I felt indignant at the thought.

I therefore resolved to vindicate my honour by neither going away nor remaining.

"If I stay," I said to myself, "the Jew will be adjudged in the right; and if I go, the duke will think I have taken advantage of his favour and, so to speak, his present of fifty louis if the bill were protested. I will not let anyone enjoy a satisfaction which is no one's due."

After these considerations, which I thought worthy of a wiser head than mine, I packed up my trunk, ordered horses and, after eating a good dinner and paying my bill, went to Wolfenbittel, with the idea of spending a week there. I was sure of finding amusement, for Wolfenbittel contains the third largest library in Europe and I had long been anxious to see it.

The learned librarian, whose politeness was all the better for being completely devoid of affectation, told me that, not only could I have whatever books I wished to see, but I could take them to my lodging, not even excepting the manuscripts, which are the chief feature of that fine library.

I spent a week in the library, leaving it only to take my meals or go to bed, and I count this week as one of the happiest I have ever spent, for then I forgot myself completely and in the delight of study the past, present and future were entirely blotted out. Of some such sort, I think, must be the joys of the redeemed; and now I see that only a few trifling little circumstances and incidents were wanting to make me a

perfect sage, instead of the fool I have been. And here I must note a circumstance which my readers may scarcely believe but which, for all that, is quite true, namely, that I have always preferred virtue to vice and that, when I sinned, I did so out of mere lightness of heart, for which no doubt I shall be blamed by many persons. But no matter, a man has to give an account of his actions to only two beings, himself here and God hereafter.

At Wolfenbittel I gathered a good many hints on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which will not be found in any commentator and of which the great Pope knew nothing. Some of these considerations will be found in my translation of the *Iliad*; the rest are still in manuscript and will probably never see the light. However, I burn nothing, not even these *Memoirs*, though I often think of doing so but the time never comes.

At the end of the week I returned to the same inn in Brunswick where I had stayed before, and sent word to my godson Daturi of my arrival.

I was delighted to hear that no one suspected I had spent the fortnight within five leagues of Brunswick. Daturi told me the general belief was that I had returned the Jew his money and got the bill of exchange back. Nevertheless, I felt sure that the bill had been honoured in Amsterdam and that the duke knew I had been staying at Wolfenbittel.

Daturi told me that Nicolini was expecting me to dinner and I was not astonished to hear of it, for I had not taken leave of anyone. I accordingly went and the following incident, which served to justify me in the eyes of all men, took place:

We were at the roast when one of the prince's servants came in with the Jew I had beaten. The poor man came up humbly to me and said:

"I am ordered to come here, sir, to apologise for suspecting the authenticity of the bill of exchange you gave me. I have been punished by being fined the amount of my commission."

"I wish that had been your only punishment," said I.

He made me a profound bow and went out, saying that I was only too kind.

When I got back to the inn, I found a letter from Redegonde, in which she reproached me tenderly for not having been once to see her all the time I had been in Brunswick and begging me to breakfast with her in a little country house.

"I shall not be in my mother's company," she added, "but in that of a young lady of your acquaintance, whom I am sure you will be glad to see again."

I liked Redegonde and I had neglected her in Brunswick only because my means did not allow my making her a handsome present. I resolved to accept her invitation, my curiosity being rather stimulated by the mention of the young lady.

I was on hand promptly at the time indicated and found Redegonde, looking charming, in a pretty room on the ground floor and with her

was a young artiste whom I had known as a child shortly before I had been put under The Leads. I pretended to be delighted to see her but was really entirely taken up with Redegonde and congratulated her upon her pretty house. She said she had taken it for six months but did not sleep there.

After coffee had been served, we were on the point of going out for a stroll when who should come in but the prince! He smiled pleasantly when he saw us, and apologised to Redegonde for interrupting our little party.

The appearance of the prince enlightened me as to the position of my delightful fellow countrywoman and I understood why she had been so precise about the time at which I was to come. Redegonde had made the conquest of the worthy prince, who was always disposed to gallantry but felt it his duty during the first year of his marriage to the King of England's sister to preserve some kind of incognito in his amours.

We spent an hour walking up and down and talking of London and Berlin, but nothing was said of the Jew or the bill of exchange. The prince was delighted with my warm eulogium of his library at Wolfenbuttel and laughed with all his heart when I said that, had it not been for the intellectual nourishment I enjoyed, the bad fare at the inn would certainly have reduced me to half my present size.

After bidding a graceful farewell to the nymph, the prince left us and we heard him galloping away on his horse.

When I was alone with Redegonde, far from begging for new favours, I advised her to be faithful to the prince; but, though appearances were certainly not deceitful in this case, she would not admit anything. This was in accordance with her rôle as a young woman and I did not reproach her for her want of confidence.

I spent the rest of the day at the inn and started the next morning at daybreak.

When I got to Magdeburg, I took a letter of introduction from General Bekw—to an officer. He showed me the fortress and kept me three days, allowing me to enjoy all the pleasures of the table, women and gaming. However, I was very moderate and managed to increase my savings in a small degree, contenting myself with modest wagers.

From Magdeburg I went straight to Berlin without caring to stop at Potsdam, as the King was not there. The fearful Prussian roads, with their sandy soil, made me take three days to do eighteen Prussian miles. Prussia is a country of which much could be made with labour and capital, but I do not think it will ever become a really fine country.

I put up at the Hôtel de Paris, which was both comfortable and economical. Madame Rufin, who kept it, had entered into the spirit of her business without losing her French politeness and thus the inn had got a reputation. As soon as I was in my room, she came to ask me if I were satisfied and to make divers arrangements for my comfort. There was a *table d'hôte* and those who ate in their private rooms paid double.

"This arrangement," I said, "may suit you but for the present it will not suit me. I want to dine in my own room but I am not willing to pay double; I will therefore pay as if I were in the public room but, if you like, you need send me only half the number of dishes."

"I agree, on condition that you sup with me; we will not put it in the accounts and you will meet only friends at my little suppers."

I thought her proposal so curious a one that I had a great inclination to laugh but, finding it at the same time very advantageous, I accepted frankly and as if we had long been friends.

I was tired the first day and did not sup with her till the day following. Madame Rufin had a husband who attended to the cooking, and a son, but neither of them came to these suppers. The first time I went to one of them, I met an elderly but agreeable and sensible gentleman. He lodged in a room adjoining mine and called himself Baron Treidel; his sister had married the Duke of Courland, Jean Ernest Biron, or Birlen. The baron, who was extremely pleasant, became my friend and remained so for the couple of months I spent in Berlin. I also met a Hamburg merchant named Greve and his wife, whom he had just married and had brought to Berlin that she might see the marvels of the "Warrior King's" Court. She was as pleasant as her husband and I paid her an assiduous court. A lively and high-spirited individual called Noel, who was the sole and beloved cook of His Prussian Majesty, was the fourth person. He came only rarely to the suppers on account of his duties in the King's kitchen. As I have said, His Majesty had only this one cook and Noel had only one scullion to help him.

M. Noel, the ambassador of the French Republic at The Hague, is, as I am assured, the son of this cook, who was an excellent man. And here I must say, in despite of my hatred for the French Revolutionary Government, that I am not at all ill-pleased that a man of talents should be enabled to fill exalted offices, which under the old system of privilege were often occupied by fools.

If it had not been for the culinary skill of Noel, the cook, the famous atheist physician, La Mettrie, would not have died of indigestion, for the pie he ate too much of at Lord Fisonel's was made by Noel.

La Mettrie had often supped with Madame Rufin and I thought it disobliging of him to die so soon, for I should have liked to know him, as he was a learned man and full of mirth. He expired laughing, though it is said that death from indigestion is the most painful of all. Voltaire told me he thought La Mettrie the most obstinate atheist in the world, and I could easily believe it after reading his works. The King of Prussia himself pronounced the funeral oration, using the words, "It is not wonderful that he believed only in the existence of matter, for all the *esprit* in the world was enclosed in his own body." No one but a king would venture on such a sally in a funeral oration. However, Frederick the Great was a deist and not an atheist, but that is of little consequence, since he never allowed the belief in a God to influence his actions in the slightest degree. Some say that an atheist

who ponders over the possible existence of a God is better than a deist who never thinks of the Deity, but I will not venture to decide this point.

The first visit I paid in Berlin was to Calsabigi, the younger brother of the Calsabigi with whom I had founded the lottery in Paris in 1757. He had left Paris and his wife, too, and had set up a lottery in Brussels; but his extravagance was so great that he became a bankrupt, in spite of the efforts of Count Cobenzl to keep him going. He fled from Brussels to Berlin and was introduced to the King of Prussia. He was a plausible talker and persuaded the monarch to establish a lottery, to make him the manager and give him the title of Counsellor of State. He promised that the lottery would bring in an annual revenue of at least two hundred thousand crowns, and asked a commission of only ten per cent for himself.

The lottery had been going for two years and had had a great success, as until then it had had no large losses; but the King, who knew that the luck might turn, was always in a fidget about it. With this idea, he told Calsabigi that he must carry it on on his own responsibility and pay him a hundred thousand crowns per annum, that being the cost of his Italian Theatre.

I happened to call on Calsabigi on the very day on which the King intimated to him this decision. After talking over our old relationship and the vicissitudes we had both experienced, he told me what had happened; it seemed an unexpected blow to him. The next drawing, he said, would be at the King's risk, but the public would have to be informed that in future the lottery would be a private one. He needed capital to the amount of two million crowns, for he foresaw that otherwise the lottery would collapse, as people would not risk their money without the certainty of being paid in the event of their winning. He said he would guarantee me an income of ten thousand crowns per annum if I succeeded in making the King change his mind and, by way of encouragement, he recalled to my mind the effect of my persuasive powers in Paris seven years before.

"'Tis a good omen," said he, "and, without any superstition, I believe that the good genius of the lottery brought you to Berlin just now."

I laughed at his illusions but I pitied him. I showed him the impossibility of convincing an individual whose only argument was, "I am afraid and don't wish to be afraid any longer." He begged me to stay to dinner and introduced me to his wife. This was a double surprise for me, in the first place because I thought *Générale La Motte*, as his first wife was called, to be still living, and in the second place because I recognised in this second wife of his *Mademoiselle Bélanger*. I addressed the usual compliments to her and inquired after her mother. She replied with a profound sigh and told me not to ask any questions about her family, as she had only bad news to tell me.

I had known *Madame Bélanger* in Paris; she was a widow with one daughter and seemed to be well off. Now I saw this daughter,

pretty enough and well married and yet in this doleful humour and I felt embarrassed and yet curious.

After Calsabigi had placed me in a position to entertain a high opinion of the skill of his cook, he showed me his horses and carriages, begging me to take a drive with his wife and come back to supper, which he said was his best meal.

When we were in the carriage together, the necessity of talking about something led me to ask the lady by what happy chain of circumstances she found herself the wife of Calsabigi.

"His real wife is still alive, so I have not the misfortune of occupying that position, but everyone in Berlin thinks I am his lawful wife. Three years ago I was deprived of my mother and the means of livelihood at one stroke, for my mother had an annuity. None of my relatives was rich enough to help me and, wishing to live virtuously above all things, I subsisted for two years on the sale of my mother's furniture, boarding with a worthy woman who made her living by embroidery. I learnt her art and went out only to mass on Sundays. I was a prey to melancholy and, when I had spent all I had, I went to M. Brea, a Genoese, on whom I thought I could rely. I begged him to get me a place as a mere waiting-maid, thinking that I was tolerably competent for such a position. He promised to do what he could for me and five or six days afterwards he made me the following proposal:

"He read me a letter from Calsabigi, of whom I had never heard, charging him to send a virtuous young lady to Berlin. She must be of good birth, good education and pleasant appearance, as, when his aged and infirm wife died, he intended to marry her.

"As such a person would most probably be badly off, Calsabigi begged M. Brea to give her fifty louis to buy clothes and linen and fifty louis to journey to Berlin with a maid. M. Brea was also authorised to promise that the young lady should hold the position of Calsabigi's wife and be presented in that character to all his friends; that she should have a waiting-maid, a carriage, an allowance of clothes and a certain monthly amount as pin-money to be spent as she chose. He promised, if the arrangement was not found suitable, to set her free at the end of a year, giving her a hundred louis and leaving her in possession of whatever money she might have saved and such clothes and jewels as he might have given her; in fine, if the lady agreed to live with him till he was able to marry her, Calsabigi promised to execute a deed of gift in her favour to the amount of ten thousand crowns, which the public would believe to be her dowry, and, if he died before being able to marry her, she would have a right to claim the aforesaid sum from his estate.

"With such fine promises did Brea persuade me to leave my native country, to come and dishonour myself here, for, though everybody treats me as if I were his wife, it is probably known that I am only his mistress. I have been here six months and I have never had an instant's happiness."

"Has he not kept the conditions you have mentioned?"

"Conditions! Calsabigi's state of health will kill him long before his wife and in that case I shall have nothing, for he is loaded with debt and his creditors would have the first claim on the estate. Besides, I do not like him and the reason is that he loves me too much. You can understand that; his devotion wearies me."

"At all events, you can return to Paris in six months' time or, in fact, do anything you like when the term stipulated has expired. You will get your hundred louis and can lay in a pretty stock of linen."

"If I go to Paris, I shall be dishonoured and, if I remain here, I shall be dishonoured. In fact I am very unhappy and Brea is the cause of my woe. Nevertheless, I can't blame him, as he could not have been aware that his friend's property consisted only of debts. And now that the King has withdrawn his guarantee, the lottery will fail and Calsabigi will inevitably become a bankrupt."

She had studiously refrained from exaggeration and I could not help confessing that she was to be pitied. I advised her to try to sell the deed of gift for ten thousand crowns, as it was not likely he would raise any objection.

"I have thought it over," said she, "but to do that I have need of a friend; of course, I do not expect to dispose of it save at a great loss."

I promised to see what I could do for her.

There were four of us at supper. The fourth person was a young man who had helped in the Paris and Brussels lotteries and had followed Calsabigi to Berlin. He was evidently in love with Mademoiselle Bélanger, but I did not think his love was crowned with success.

At dessert Calsabigi begged me to give him my opinion of a scheme he had drafted, the aim of which was to bring in a sum of two million crowns, so that the credit of the lottery might remain secure.

The lady left us to talk at our ease. She was between twenty-four and twenty-five and, without having much wit, she possessed a great knowledge of the usages of society, which is better than wit in a woman; in fine, she had all that a man could well desire. The sentiments I felt for her were confined to those of friendship and esteem after the confidence she had placed in me.

Calsabigi's project was brief but clear and well thought out. He invited capitalists not to speculate in the lottery, but to guarantee it for a certain sum. In the case of the lottery's losing, each guarantor would have to share in paying according to the sum named and in like manner they would share in the profits.

I promised to give him my opinion in writing by the next day and I substituted the following plan for his:

1. A capital of a million would, I judged, be ample.
2. This million should be divided into a hundred shares of ten thousand crowns each.
3. Each share must be taken up before a notary, who would answer for the shareholder's solvency.

4. All dividends to be paid the third day after the drawing.
5. In case of loss, the shareholder to renew his share.
6. A cashier, chosen by a majority of four-fifths of the shareholders, to have the control of all moneys.
7. Winning tickets to be paid the day after the drawing.
8. On the eve of the drawing, the shareholder's cashier to have an account of receipts from the lottery cashier and the former to lock the safe with three keys, one of them to remain in his hands, one in the hands of the lottery cashier and one in the hands of the manager of the lottery.
9. Only the simple drawing, the *ambe* and the *terne*, to be retained; the *quaterne* and the *quine* to be abolished.
10. On the three combinations, a shilling to be the minimum and a crown the maximum stake; the offices to be closed twenty-four hours before the drawing.
11. Ten per cent to go to Calsabigi, the manager; all expenses of farming to be paid by him.
12. Calsabigi to be entitled to the possession of two shares without a guarantee being required.

I saw by Calsabigi's face that the plan did not please him, but I told him he would not get shareholders save on these terms or on terms even less favourable to himself.

He had degraded the lottery to the level of *biribi*; his luxury and extravagance caused him to be distrusted; it was known that he was head over ears in debt; and the King could not banish the fear that he would be cheated in spite of the keenness of his comptroller-general.

The last drawing under the King's sanction put everyone in good spirits, for the lottery lost twenty thousand crowns. The King sent the money immediately by a privy councillor, but it was said, when he heard the result of the drawing, that he burst out laughing, observing, "I knew it would be so, and I am only too happy to have got quit of it so cheaply."

I thought it my duty to go and sup with the director to console him and I found him in a state of great depression. He could not help thinking that this unhappy drawing would make the task of getting shareholders more difficult than ever. Hitherto, the lottery had always been a gainer, but its late loss could not have come at a worse time.

Nevertheless, he did not lose heart and the next morning the public were informed by printed bills that the office would remain closed till a sufficient number of guarantors were found.

CHAPTER 116

THE fifth day after my arrival in Berlin, I presented myself to the lord-marshal, who since the death of his brother had been styled Lord Keith. I had seen him in London after his return from Scotland, where he had been reinstated in the family estates, which had been confiscated

asked in a terrible voice what I wanted of him. This greeting surprised me and my voice stuck in my throat.

"Well, speak out. Are you not the person who wrote to me?"

"Yes, sire, but I have forgotten everything now. I thought I would not be awed by the majesty of a king, but I was mistaken. The lord-marshal should have warned me."

"Then he knows you? Let us walk. What is it you want? What do you think of my garden?"

His inquiries after my needs and my opinion of his garden were simultaneous. To any other person I would have answered that I did not know anything about gardening, but this would have been equivalent to refusing to answer the question; and no monarch, even if he be a philosopher, could endure that. I therefore replied that I thought the garden superb.

"But," he said, "the gardens of Versailles are much finer."

"Yes, sire, but that is chiefly on account of the fountains."

"True, but it is not my fault; there is no water here. I have spent more than three hundred thousand crowns to get water, but unsuccessfully."

"Three hundred thousand crowns, sire! If Your Majesty had spent them all at once, the fountains should be here."

"Oh, oh! I see you are acquainted with hydraulics."

I could not say that he was mistaken, for fear of offending him, so I simply bent my head, which might mean either "yes" or "no." Thank God the King did not trouble to test my knowledge of the science of hydraulics, with which I was totally unacquainted.

He kept on the move all the time and, as he turned his head from one side to the other hurriedly, asked me what forces Venice could put into the field in war-time.

"Twenty men-of-war, sire, and a number of galleys."

"What are the land forces?"

"Seventy thousand men, sire, all of whom are subjects of the Republic, and assessing each village at one man."

"That is not true; no doubt you wish to amuse me by telling me these fables. Give me your opinion on taxation."

This was the first conversation I had ever had with a monarch. I made a rapid review of the situation and found myself much in the same position as an actor of the improvised comedy of the Italians, who is greeted by the hisses of the gallery gods if he stops short a moment. I therefore replied, with all the airs of a doctor of finance, that I could say something about the theory of taxation.

"That's what I want," he replied, "for the practice is no business of yours."

"There are three kinds of taxes, considered as to their effects. The first is ruinous, the second a necessary evil and the third invariably beneficial."

"Good! Go on."

"The ruinous impost is the royal tax, the necessary is the military and the beneficial is the popular."

As I had not given the subject any thought, I was in a disagreeable position, for I was obliged to go on speaking and yet not to talk nonsense.

"The royal tax, sire, is that which depletes the purses of the subject to fill the coffers of the king."

"And that kind of tax is always ruinous, you think."

"Always, sire; it prevents the circulation of money, the soul of commerce and the mainstay of the state."

"But, if the tax be levied to keep up the strength of the army, you say it is a necessary evil?"

"Yes, it is necessary and yet evil, for war is an evil."

"Quite so; and now about the popular tax?"

"This is always a benefit, for the monarch takes with one hand and gives with the other; he improves towns and roads, founds schools, protects the sciences, cherishes the arts; in fine, he directs this tax towards improving the condition and increasing the happiness of his people."

"There is a good deal of truth in that. I suppose you know Calabigi?"

"I ought to, Your Majesty, as he and I established the Genoa Lottery in Paris seven years ago."

"In what class would you put this taxation, for you will agree that it is taxation of a kind?"

"Certainly, sire, and not the least important. It is beneficial when the monarch spends his profits for the good of the people."

"But the monarch may lose?"

"Once in fifty."

"Is that conclusion the result of a mathematical calculation?"

"Yes, sire."

"Such calculations often prove deceptive."

"Not so, may it please Your Majesty, when God remains neutral."

"What has God to do with it?"

"Well, sire, we will call it destiny or chance."

"Good! I may possibly be of your opinion as to the calculation, but I don't like your Genoa Lottery. It seems to me an elaborate swindle and I would have nothing more to do with it, even if it were positively certain that I should never lose."

"Your Majesty is right, for the confidence which makes the people risk their money in a lottery is entirely fallacious."

This was the end of our strange dialogue; stopping before a building, he looked me over and then, after a short silence, observed, "Do you know that you are a very handsome man?"

"Is it possible that, after the scientific conversation we have had, Your Majesty could note in me the least of the qualities which adorn your life-guardsmen?"

The King smiled kindly and said, "Since you know Marshal Keith, I will speak to him of you."

With that, he raised his hat and bade me farewell. I retired with a profound bow.

Three or four days after the marshal gave me the agreeable news that I had found favour in the King's eyes and that His Majesty thought of employing me.

I was curious to learn the nature of this employment and, being in no kind of hurry, I resolved to await events in Berlin. The time passed pleasantly enough, for I was with either Calsabigi, Baron Treidel or my landlady, and, when these resources failed me, I used to walk in the park, musing over the events of my life.

Calsabigi had no difficulty in obtaining permission to continue the lottery on his own account and he boldly announced that thenceforward he would conduct the lottery at his own risk. His audacity was crowned with success and he obtained a profit of a hundred thousand crowns. With this he paid most of his debts and gave his mistress ten thousand crowns, she returning the document entitling her to that amount. After this lucky drawing it was easy to find guarantors and the lottery went on successfully for two or three years.

Nevertheless Calsabigi ended by becoming bankrupt and died rather poor in Italy. He might be compared to the Danaïdes; the more he got, the more he spent. His mistress eventually made a respectable marriage and returned to Paris, where she lived in comfort.

At the period of which I am speaking, the Duchess of Brunswick, the King's sister, came to pay him a visit. She was accompanied by her daughter, who married the Crown Prince of Russia in the following year. I saw the King in a suit of lustring, trimmed with gold lace, and black silk stockings on his legs. He looked truly comic and more like a theatrical heavy father than a great King. He came into the hall with his sister on his arm and attracted universal attention, for only very old men could remember seeing him without his uniform and top boots.

I was not aware that the famous Madame Denis was in Berlin and it was therefore an agreeable surprise to see her in the ballet one evening, dancing a *pas seul* in an exquisite manner. We were old friends and I resolved to pay her a visit the next day.

I must tell the reader (supposing I ever have one) that, when I was about twelve years old, I went to the theatre with my mother and saw, not without much heart-beating, a girl of eight who danced a minuet in so ravishing a manner that the whole house applauded loudly. This young dancer, who was the pantaloons' daughter, charmed me to such a degree that I could not resist going to the dressing-room to compliment her on her performance. I wore the cassock in those days and she was astonished when she heard her father order her to get up and kiss me. She kissed me nevertheless with much grace and, though I received the compliment with a good deal of awkwardness, I was so delighted that I could not help buying her a little ring from a toy-merchant in the theatre. She kissed me again with great gratitude and enthusiasm.

The pleasantest part about this was that the sequin I gave for the

ring belonged to Dr. Gozzi and so, when I went back to him, I was in a pitiable state, for I had not only spent money which did not belong to me but I had spent it for so small a favour as a kiss.

I knew that the next day I should have to give an account of the money he had entrusted to me and, not having the least idea as to what I should say, I had a bad night of it. The next morning everything came out and my mother made up the sequin to the doctor. I laugh now when I think of this childish piece of gallantry, which was an omen of the extent to which my heart was to be swayed by the fair sex.

The toy-woman who had sold me the ring came the next day at dinner-time to our house and, after producing several rings and trinkets which were judged too dear, she began to praise my generosity and said that I had not thought the ring I had given to pretty Jeannette too dear. This did my business and I had to confess the whole, laying my fault to the account of love and promising not to do such a thing again. But, when I uttered the word "love," everybody roared with laughter and began to make cruel game of me. I wished myself a mile away and registered an inner resolve never to confess my faults again. The reader knows how well I kept my promise.

The pantaloon's little daughter was my mother's goddaughter and my thoughts were full of her. My mother, who loved me and saw my pain, asked me if I would like the little girl to be invited to supper. My grandmother, however, opposed the idea and I was obliged to her.

The day after this burlesque scene I returned to Padua, where Bettina soon made me forget the little ballet girl. I saw her again at Charlottenburg and that was now twenty-seven years ago. I longed to have a talk with her and see whether she would remember me, though I did not expect her to. I asked if her husband Denis was with her and they told me that the King had banished him because he ill-treated her.

I called on her the day after the performance and was politely received, but she said she did not think she had had the pleasure of seeing me before. By degrees, I told her of the events of her childhood, and how she enchanted all Venice by the grace with which she danced the minuet. She interrupted me by saying that at that time she was only six years old.

"You could not be more," I replied, "for I was only ten; and nevertheless I fell in love with you and never have I forgotten the kiss you gave me by your father's order in return for some trifling present I made you."

"Be quiet; you gave me a beautiful ring and I kissed you of my own free will. You wore the cassock then. I have never forgotten you. But can it really be you?"

"It is indeed."

"I am delighted to see you again. But I could never have recognised you and I suppose you would not have recognised me."

"No, I should not have known you unless I heard your name mentioned."

"One alters in twenty years, you know."

"Yes, one cannot expect to have the same face as at six."

"You can bear witness that I am not more than twenty-six, though some evil speakers give me ten years more."

"You should not take any notice of such calumnies, my dear. You are in the flower of your age and made for the service of love. For my part, I congratulate myself on being able to tell you that you are the first woman who inspired me with a real passion."

We could not help becoming affectionate if we continued to keep up the conversation in this style, but experience had taught us that it was well to remain as we were for the time being.

Madame Denis was still fresh and youthful-looking, though she persisted in abbreviating her age by ten years. Of course she could not deceive me and she must have known it, nevertheless she liked me to bear outward testimony to her youthfulness. She would have detested me if I had attempted to prove to her what she knew perfectly well but did not care to confess. No doubt she cared little for my thoughts on the subject and she may have imagined that I owed her gratitude for diminishing her age, as it enabled me to diminish my own in order to make our tales agree. However, I did not trouble myself much about it, for it is almost a duty in an actress to disguise her age, as, in spite of talent, the public will not forgive a woman for having been born too soon.

I thought her behaviour augured well, and I hoped she would not make me languish long. She showed me her house, which was all elegance and good taste. I asked her if she had a lover and she replied with a smile that all Berlin thought so, but that it was nevertheless deceived on the principal point, as the individual in question was more of a father than a lover.

"But you deserve to have a real lover; I cannot conceive how you can do without one."

"I assure you I don't trouble myself about it. I am subject to convulsions, which are the plague of my life. I want to try the Teplitz waters, which are said to be excellent for all nervous affections; but the King has refused his permission, which I nevertheless hope to obtain next year."

I felt ardently disposed and thought she was pleased with the restraint I put upon myself.

"Will you be annoyed," said I, "if I call upon you frequently?"

"If you don't mind, I will call myself your niece or your cousin and then we can see each other."

"Do you know that that may possibly be true? I would not swear that you were not my sister."

This sally made us talk of the friendship that had subsisted between her father and my mother, and we allowed ourselves those caresses which are permitted to near relations, but, feeling that things were going too far, we ceased. As she bade me farewell, she asked me to dine with her the next day and I accepted.

As I went back to my inn, I reflected on the strange combinations

which made my life one continuous chain of events, and I felt it my duty to give thanks to eternal Providence, for I felt that I had been born under a happy star.

The next day, when I went to dine with Madame Denis, I found a numerous company assembled. The first person who greeted me with the warmth of an old friend was a young dancer named Aubri, whom I had known in Paris and Venice. He was famous for having been the lover of one of the most exalted Venetian ladies and at the same time her husband's pathic. It was said that this scandalous intimacy was of such a nature that Aubri used to sleep between the husband and the wife. At the beginning of Lent the State Inquisitors sent him to Trieste. He introduced me to his wife, who danced like himself and was called La Santina. He had married her in St. Petersburg, from which city he had just come, and they were going to spend the winter in Paris. The next person who advanced to greet me was a fat man who held out his hand and said we had been friends twenty-five years before but that we were so young then that it would be no wonder if we did not know each other. "We got acquainted in Padua at Dr. Gozzi's," he added. "My name is Joseph da Loglio."

"I remember you," I replied. "You were engaged at that time as violoncello for the chapel of the Russian Empress."

"Exactly; and now I am returning to my native land to leave it no more. I have the honour to introduce you to my wife, who was born in St. Petersburg but is a daughter of Modonis, the violinist, whose reputation is European. In a week I shall be in Dresden, where I hope to have the honour of seeing Madame Casanova, your mother."

I was delighted to find myself in such congenial society, but I could see that Madame Denis did not relish these recollections extending over a quarter of a century, and I turned the conversation to the events in St. Petersburg which had resulted in Catherine the Great ascending the throne. Da Loglio told us that he had taken a small part in this conspiracy and had thought it prudent to get out of the way. "Fortunately," he added, "this was a contingency I had long provided against, and I am in a position to spend the rest of my days in comfort in Italy."

Madame Denis then observed:

"A week ago a Piedmontese named Audar was introduced to me. He had been a chief mover in the conspiracy and the Empress gave him a present of a hundred thousand roubles and an order to leave Russia immediately."

I heard afterwards that this Audar bought an estate in Piedmont, on which he built a fine mansion. In two or three years, it was struck by a thunderbolt and the unfortunate was killed in the ruins of his own house. If this was a blow from an Almighty hand, it could not, at all events, have been directed by the genius of Russia, for, if the unfortunate Peter III had lived, he would have retarded Russian civilisation by a hundred years.

The Empress Catherine rewarded most magnificently all the foreign-

ers who had assisted her in her plots, and showed herself grateful to the Russians who had helped her mount the throne, while, like a crafty politician, she sent out of the country such nobles as she suspected to be averse to revolution.

It was Da Loglio and his pretty wife who determined me to betake myself to Russia in case the King of Prussia did not give me any employment. I was assured I would make my fortune there and Da Loglio promised to give me good introductions.

Soon after this worthy man left Berlin, my intimacy with Madame Denis commenced. One night when I was supping with her, she was seized with convulsions which lasted all night. I did not leave her for a moment; her gratitude finished what my love had begun twenty-six years before, and our amorous commerce lasted while I stayed in Berlin. We shall hear of her again in Florence six years later.

Some days after Madame Denis took me to Potsdam, to show me all the sights of the town. Our intimacy offended no one, for she was generally believed to be my niece, and the general who kept her either believed the report or, like a man of sense, pretended to believe it.

Amongst other notable things I saw at Potsdam was the sight of the King, commanding the first battalion of his grenadiers, all picked men, the flower of the Prussian army.

The room which we occupied at the inn faced a walk by which the King passed when he came from the castle. The shutters were all closed and our landlady told us that on one occasion, when a pretty dancer called La Reggiana was sleeping in the same room, the King had seen her *in puris naturalibus*. This was too much for his modesty and he had ordered the shutters to be closed, and closed they had remained, though this event was four years old. The King had some cause to fear, for he had been severely treated by La Barbarina. In the King's bedroom we saw her portrait, that of La Cochois, sister to the actress who became Marchioness d'Argens, and that of Maria Theresa, with whom Frederick had been in love—or, rather, he had been in love with the idea of becoming emperor. After we had admired the beauty and elegance of the castle, we could not help wondering at the way in which the master of the castle was lodged. He had a mean room and slept on a little bed with a screen around it. There was no dressing-gown and no slippers. The valet showed us an old cap which the King put on when he had a cold; it looked as if it must be very uncomfortable. His Majesty's desk was a table covered with pens, paper, half-burnt manuscripts and an inkpot; beside it was a sofa. The valet told us these manuscripts contained the history of the last Prussian war and the King had been so annoyed by their accidentally getting burnt that he had resolved to have no more to do with the work. He probably changed his mind, for the book, which is little esteemed, was published shortly after his death.

Five or six weeks after my curious conversation with the monarch, Marshal Keith told me His Majesty had been pleased to create me a tutor to the new corps of Pomeranian cadets which he was just es-

tablishing. There were to be fifteen cadets and five tutors, so that each should have the care of three pupils. The salary was six hundred crowns and board found. The duty of the tutors was to follow or accompany the cadets wherever they went, Court included. I had to be quick in making up my mind, for the four others were already installed and His Majesty did not like to be kept waiting. I asked Lord Keith where the college was and promised to give him a reply by the next day.

I had to summon all my powers of self-restraint to my assistance when I heard this extravagant proposal coming from a man who was so discreet in most things, but my astonishment was increased when I saw the abode of these fifteen young noblemen of rich Pomerania. It consisted of three or four large rooms almost devoid of furniture, several whitewashed bedrooms, containing a wretched bed, a deal table and two deal chairs. The young cadets, boys of twelve or thirteen, all looked dirty and untidy and were boxed up in a wretched uniform which matched admirably their rude and rustic faces. They were in company with their four governors, whom I took for their servants and who looked at me in a stupefied manner, not daring to think that I was to be their future colleague.

Just as I was going to bid an eternal farewell to this abode of misery, one of the governors put his head out of the window and exclaimed, "The King is riding up."

I could not avoid meeting him and, besides, I was glad enough to see him again, especially in such a place.

His Majesty came up with his friend Icilius, examined everything and saw me, but did not honour me with a word. I was elegantly dressed and wore my cross set with brilliants. But I had to bite my lips so as not to burst out laughing when Frederick the Great got in a towering rage at a chamber utensil which stood beside one of the beds and which did not appear to be in a very clean condition.

"Whose bed is this?" cried the monarch.

"Mine, sire," answered a trembling cadet.

"Good! But it is not you I am angry with; where is your tutor?"

The reverend tutor presented himself and the monarch, after honouring him with the title of "blockhead," proceeded to scold him roundly. However, he ended by saying that there was a servant and the tutor ought to see that he did his work properly.

This disgusting scene was enough for me and I hastened to call on Marshal Keith, to announce my determination. The old soldier laughed at the description I gave him of the academy and said I was quite right to despise such an office, but that I ought nevertheless to go and thank the King before I left Berlin. I said I did not feel inclined towards another interview with such a man and he agreed to present my thanks and excuses in my stead.

I made up my mind to go to Russia and began my preparations in good earnest. Baron Treidel supported my resolve by offering to give me a letter of introduction to his sister, the Duchess of Courland. I

wrote to M. de Bragadin to give me a letter for a banker in St. Petersburg and to remit me through him every month a sum which would keep me in comfort.

I could not travel without a servant and chance kindly provided me with one. I was sitting with Madame Rufin when a young Lorrainer came in; like Bias, he bore all his fortune with him, but in his case it was carried under his arm. He introduced himself thus, "Madame, my name is Lambert; I come from Lorraine, and I wish to lodge here."

"Very good, sir, but you must pay for your board and lodging every day."

"That, madame, is out of the question, for I have not a farthing, but I shall have some money when I have made myself known."

"I am afraid I cannot put you up on those conditions, sir."

He was going away with a mortified air when my heart was touched and I called him back.

"Stay," said I. "I will pay for you to-day."

Happiness beamed over his face.

"What have you in that little bundle?" said I.

"Two shirts, a score of mathematical books and some other trifles."

I took him to my room and, finding him tolerably well educated, I asked him how he came to be in such a state of destitution.

"I come from Strasburg," he replied. "A cadet of a regiment stationed there having given me a blow in a coffee-house, I paid him a visit the next day in his own room and stabbed him. After this I went home, made up my bundle and left the town. I walked all the way and lived soberly, so that my money lasted till this morning. Tomorrow I shall write to my mother, who lives at Lunéville, and I am sure she will send me some money."

"And what do you think of doing?"

"I want to become a military engineer but, if needs must, I am ready to enlist as a private soldier."

"I can give you board and lodging till you hear from your mother."

"Heaven has sent you in my way," said he, kissing my hand gratefully.

I did not suspect him of deceiving me, though he stumbled somewhat in his narrative. However, my curiosity led me to write to M. de Schauenburg, who was then at Strasburg, to inquire if the tale were true.

The next day I happened to meet an officer of engineers, who told me that young men of education were so plentiful that they did not receive them into the service unless they were willing to serve as common soldiers. I was sorry for the young man to be reduced so low as that. I began to spend some time with him every day in mathematical calculations and conceived the idea of taking him with me to St. Petersburg and broached the subject to him.

"It would be a piece of good fortune for me," he replied, "and, to

show my gratitude, I will gladly wait on you as a servant during the journey."

He spoke French badly but, as he was a Lorrainer, I was not astonished at that. Nevertheless I was surprised to find he did not know a word of Latin and that his spelling was of the wildest description. He saw me laughing but did not seem in the least ashamed; he said he had gone to school only to learn mathematics and that he was very glad he had escaped the infliction of learning grammar. Indeed, on every subject except mathematics, he was profoundly ignorant. He had no manners whatever; in fact, he was a mere peasant.

Ten or twelve days later I received a letter from M. de Schauenburg, saying that the name of Lambert was unknown in Strasburg and that no cadet had been killed or wounded. When I showed Lambert this letter, he said that, as he wished to enter the army, he thought it would be of service to him to show that he was brave, adding that, as this lie had not been told with the idea of imposing on me, I should forgive it.

"Poverty," said he, "is a rascally teacher who gives a man some bad lessons. I am not a liar by disposition, but I nevertheless told you a lie on another and a more important matter. I don't expect any money whatever from my poor mother, who rather needs that I should send her some. So forgive me and be sure I shall be a faithful servant to you."

I was always ready to forgive other men's peccadillos, and not without cause. I liked Lambert's line of argument and told him we would set out in five or six days.

Baron Bodisson, a Venetian who wanted to sell the King a picture by Andrea del Sarto, asked me to come with him to Potsdam and the desire of seeing the monarch once again made me accept the invitation. When I reached Potsdam, I went to see the parade, at which Frederick was nearly always to be found. When he saw me, he came up and asked me in a familiar manner when I was going to start for St. Petersburg.

"In five or six days, if Your Majesty has no objection."

"I wish you a pleasant journey; but what do you hope to do in that land?"

"What I had hoped to do in this land, namely, to please the sovereign."

"Have you an introduction to the Empress?"

"No, but I have an introduction to a banker."

"Ah! That's much better. If you pass through Prussia on your return, I shall be delighted to hear of your adventures in Russia."

"Farewell, sire."

Such was the second interview I had with this great king, whom I never saw again.

After I had taken leave of all my friends, I applied to Baron Treidel, who gave me a letter for M. de Kaiserling, lord chancellor at Mitau, and another for his sister, the Duchess of Courland, and I

spent the last night with the charming Madame Denis. She bought my post-chaise and I started with two hundred ducats in my purse. This would have been ample for the whole journey if I had not been so foolish as to reduce it by half at a party of pleasure with some young merchants of Dantzic. I was thus unable to stay a few days at Königsberg, though I had a letter to Field-Marshal von Lehwald, who was the governor of the place. I could stay only one day to dine with this pleasant old soldier, who gave me a letter for his friend General Woiakoff, the governor of Riga.

I found I was rich enough to arrive at Mitau in state, and I therefore took a carriage and six and reached my destination in three days. At the inn where I put up, I found a Florentine artiste named Bregonci, who overwhelmed me with caresses, telling me I had loved her when I was a boy and wore the cassock. I saw her six years later in Florence, where she was living with Madame Denis.

The day after my departure from Memel, I was accosted in the open country by a man whom I recognised as a Jew. He informed me that I was on Polish territory and must pay duty on whatever merchandise I had with me.

"I am no merchant," said I, "and you will get nothing out of me."

"I have the right to examine your effects," replied the Israelite, "and I mean to make use of it."

"You are a madman," I exclaimed and I ordered the postillion to whip him off.

But the Jew ran and seized the fore horses by the bridle and stopped us and the postillion, instead of whipping him, waited with Teutonic calm for me to come and send the Jew away. I was in a furious rage and, leaping out with my cane in one hand and a pistol in the other, I soon put the Jew to flight, after applying about a dozen good sound blows to his back. I noticed that, during the combat, my fellow traveller, my Archimedes-in-ordinary, who had been asleep all the way, did not offer to stir. I reproached him for his cowardice; but he told me that he did not want the Jew to say that we had set on him two to one.

I arrived at Mitau two days after this burlesque adventure and put up at the inn facing the castle. I had only three ducats left.

The next morning I called on M. de Kaiserling, who read Baron de Treidel's letter and introduced me to his wife and left me with her, to take the baron's letter to his sister.

Madame de Kaiserling ordered a cup of chocolate to be brought me by a beautiful young Polish girl, who stood before me with lowered eyes, as if she wished to give me the opportunity of examining her at ease. As I looked at her, a whim came into my head and, as the reader is aware, I have never resisted any of my whims. However, this was a curious one. As I have said, I had only three ducats left, but, after I had emptied the cup of chocolate, I put it back on the plate and the three ducats with it.

The chancellor came back and told me that the duchess could not

see me just then but invited me to a supper and ball she was giving that evening. I accepted the supper and refused the ball, on the pretext that I had only summer clothes and a black suit. It was in the beginning of October, and the cold was already commencing to make itself felt. The chancellor returned to the Court and I to my inn.

Half an hour later, a chamberlain came to bring me Her Highness's compliments and to inform me that the ball would be a masked one and that I could appear in domino.

"You can easily get one from the Jews," he added. He further informed me that the ball was to have been a full-dress one, but that the duchess had sent word to all the guests that it would be masked, as a stranger who was to be present had sent on his trunks.

"I am sorry to have caused so much trouble," said I.

"Not at all," he replied, "the masked ball will be much more relished by the people."

He mentioned the time it was to begin and left me.

No doubt the reader will think that I found myself in an awkward predicament, and I will be honest and confess I was far from being at my ease. However, my good luck came to my assistance.

As Prussian money (which is the worst in Germany) is not current in Russia, a Jew came and asked me if I had any *friedrichs d'or*, offering to exchange them against ducats without putting me to any loss.

"I have only ducats," I replied, "and therefore I cannot profit by your offer."

"I know it, sir, and you give them away very cheaply."

Not understanding what he meant, I simply gazed at him, and he went on to say that he would be glad to let me have two hundred ducats if I would kindly give him a bill on St. Petersburg for roubles to that amount.

I was somewhat surprised at the fellow's trustfulness but, after pretending to think the matter over, I said that I was not in want of ducats but would take a hundred to oblige him. He counted out the money gratefully and I gave him a bill on a banker, Demetrio Papanelopulo, for whom Da Loglio had given me a letter. The Jew went his way, thanking me and saying that he would send me some beautiful dominos to choose from. Just then I remembered that I needed silk stockings, and I sent Lambert after the Jew to tell him to send some. When he came back, he told me that the landlord had stopped him to say that I scattered my ducats broadcast, as the Jew had informed him that I had given three ducats to Madame de Kaiserling's maid.

This, then, was the key to the mystery and it made me lose myself in wonder at the strangeness of the decrees of Fortune. I would not have been able to get a single crown at Mitau if it had not been for the way in which I had scattered my last three ducats. No doubt the astonished girl had published my generosity all over the town and

the Jew, intent on money-making, had hastened to offer his ducats to the rich nobleman who thought so little of his money.

I repaired to Court at the time appointed and M. de Kaiserling immediately presented me to the duchess and she to the duke, who was the celebrated Biron, or Birlen, the former favourite of Anna Ivanovna. He was six feet in height and still preserved some traces of having been a fine man, but old age had laid its heavy hand on him. I had a long talk with him the day after the ball.

A quarter of an hour after my arrival the ball began with a polonaise. I was a stranger with introductions, so the duchess asked me to open the ball with her. I did not know the dance but managed to acquit myself honourably in it, as the steps are simple and lend themselves to the fancy of the dancer.

After the polonaise we danced minuets and a somewhat elderly lady asked me if I could dance the King Conqueror, so I proceeded to execute it with her. It had gone out of fashion since the time of the Regency, but my companion may have shone in it in those days. All the younger ladies stood round and watched us with admiration.

After a square dance, in which I had as partner Mademoiselle de Manteufel, the prettiest of the duchess's maids of honour, Her Highness told me supper was ready. I came up to her and offered my arm and presently found myself seated beside her at a table laid for twelve, where I was the only gentleman. However, the reader need not envy me; the ladies were all elderly dowagers, who had long lost the power of turning men's heads. The duchess took the greatest care of my comforts and at the end of the repast gave me with her own hands a glass of liqueur, which I took for Tokay and praised accordingly, but it turned out to be only old English ale. I took her back to the ball when we rose from table. The young chamberlain who had invited me told me the names of all the ladies present, but I had no time to pay my court to any of them.

The next day I dined with M. de Kaiserling and handed Lambert over to a Jew to be clothed properly.

The day after I dined with the duke in a party consisting only of men. The old prince made me do most of the talking and towards the end of the dinner the conversation fell upon the resources of the country, which was rich in minerals and semi-minerals. I took it into my head to say that these resources ought to be developed and would become precious if that were done. To justify this remark, I had to speak upon the matter as if I had made it my principal study. An old chamberlain, who had the control of the mines, after allowing me to exhaust my enthusiasm, began to discuss the question himself and made divers objections, but seemed to approve of many of my remarks.

If I had reflected when I began to speak in this manner that I should have to act up to my words, I would certainly have said much less, but, as it was, the duke fancied that I knew much more than I cared to say. The result was that, when the company had risen from the table, he asked me if I could spare him a fortnight on my way to

St. Petersburg I said I should be glad to oblige him and he took me to his closet and said that the chamberlain who had spoken to me would conduct me over all the mines and manufactories in his duchies and he would be much obliged if I would write down any observations that struck me. I agreed to his proposal and said I would start the next day.

The duke was delighted with my compliance and gave the chamberlain the necessary orders and it was agreed that he should call for me at daybreak with a carriage and six.

When I got home, I made my preparations and told Lambert to be ready to accompany me with his case of instruments. I then informed him of the object of the journey and he promised to assist me to the best of his ability, though he knew nothing about mines and still less of the science of administration.

We started at daybreak, with a servant on the box and two others preceding us on horseback, armed to the teeth. We changed horses every two or three hours and, the chamberlain having brought plenty of wine, we refreshed ourselves now and again.

The tour lasted a fortnight and we stopped at five iron and copper manufactories. I found it was not necessary to have much technical knowledge in order to make notes on what I saw; all I required was a little sound argument, especially in the matter of economy, which was the duke's main object. In one place I advised reforms and in another I counselled the employment of more hands as likely to benefit the revenue. In one mine, where thirty convicts were employed, I ordered the construction of a short canal, by which three wheels could be turned and twenty men saved. Under my direction, Lambert drew the plans and made the measurements with perfect accuracy. By means of other canals I proposed to drain whole valleys, with a view to obtaining the sulphur with which the soil was permeated. I returned to Mitau quite delighted at having made myself useful and at having discovered in myself a talent which I had never suspected.

I spent the following day in making a fair copy of my report and in having the plans done on a larger scale.

The day after I took the whole to the duke, who seemed well pleased; and, as I was taking leave of him at the same time, he said he would have me driven to Riga in one of his carriages, and he gave me a letter for his son, Prince Charles, who was in garrison there. The worthy old man told me to say plainly whether I would prefer a jewel or a sum of money of equivalent value.

"From a philosopher like Your Highness," I replied, "I am not afraid to take money, for it may be more useful to me than jewels."

Without more ado, he gave me a draft for four hundred albertsthalers, which I got cashed immediately, the albertsthaler being worth half a ducat. I bade farewell to the duchess and dined a second time with M. de Kaiserling.

The next day the young chamberlain came to bring me the duke's letter, to wish me a pleasant journey and to tell me that the Court

carriage was at my door. I set out well pleased with the assistance the stuttering Lambert had given me, and by noon I was at Riga. The first thing I did was to deliver my letter of introduction to Prince Charles.

CHAPTER 117

PRINCE CHARLES DE BIRON, the younger son of the Duke of Courland, Major-General in the Russian service, Knight of the Order of Saint Alexander Newski, gave me a distinguished reception after reading his father's letter. He was thirty-six years of age, pleasant-looking (without being handsome), polite and well mannered; he spoke French extremely well. In a few sentences he let me know what he could do for me if I intended to spend some time at Riga. His table, his friends, his pleasures, his horses, his advice and his purse, all these were at my service and he offered them with the frankness of the soldier and the geniality of the prince.

"I cannot offer you a lodging," he said, "because I have hardly enough room for myself, but I will see that you get a comfortable apartment somewhere."

The apartment was soon found and I was taken to it by one of the prince's aides-de-camp. I was scarcely established when the prince came to see me and made me dine with him just as I was. It was an unceremonious dinner and I was pleased to meet again Campioni, of whom I have spoken several times in these *Memoirs*. He was a dancer but very superior to his fellows and fit for the best company, polite, witty, intelligent and a libertine in a gentlemanly way. He was devoid of prejudices and fond of women, good cheer and heavy play and knew how to keep an even mind in both good and evil fortune. We were mutually pleased to see each other again.

Another guest, a certain Baron de Sainte-Hélène from Savoy, had a pretty but very insignificant wife. The baron, a fat man, was a gamester, a gourmand and a lover of wine; add that he was a past master in the art of getting into debt and lulling his creditors into a state of false security, and you have all his capacities, for in all other respects he was a fool in the fullest sense of the word. An aide-de-camp and the prince's mistress also dined with us. This mistress, who was pale, thin and dreamy-looking but also pretty, was possibly twenty years old. She ate hardly anything, saying that she was ill and did not like anything on the table. Discontent showed itself on her every feature. The prince endeavoured, but all in vain, to make her eat and drink; she refused everything disdainfully. The prince laughed good-humouredly at her in such a manner as not to wound her feelings.

We spent two hours pleasantly enough at table and, after coffee had been served, the prince, who had business, shook me by the hand and left me with Campioni, telling me always to regard his table as my last resource.

My old friend and fellow countryman took me to his house to intro-

duce me to his wife and family. I did not know he had married a second time I found the so-called wife to be an Englishwoman, thin but full of intelligence. She had a daughter of eleven, who might easily have been taken for fifteen; she, too, was marvellously intelligent and danced, sang and played on the piano and gave glances that showed that nature had been swifter than her years. She made a conquest of me and her father congratulated her thereon, to her delight; but her mother offended her dreadfully by calling her "baby."

I went for a walk with Campioni, who gave me a good deal of information, beginning with himself.

"I have lived for ten years," he said, "with that woman. Betty, whom you admired so much, is not my daughter; the others are my children by my Englishwoman. I left St. Petersburg two years ago and I live here comfortably enough and have pupils who do me credit. I play with the prince, sometimes winning and sometimes losing, but I never win enough to enable me to satisfy a wretched creditor I left at St. Petersburg, who persecutes me on account of a bill of exchange. He may put me in prison any day and I am always expecting him to do so."

"Is the bill for a large sum?"

"Five hundred roubles."

"That is only two thousand francs."

"Yes, but unfortunately I have not got it."

"You ought to annul the debt by paying small sums on account."

"The rascal won't let me."

"Then what do you propose doing?"

"Win a heavy sum if I can and escape into Poland. The Baron de Sainte-Hélène will run away, too, if he can, for he lives only on credit. The prince is very useful to us, as we are able to play at his house; but, if we get into difficulty, he could not extricate us, as he is heavily in debt himself. He always loses at play. His mistress is expensive and gives him a great deal of trouble by her ill humour."

"Why is she so sour?"

"She wants him to keep his word, for he promised to get her married at the end of two years; and on the strength of this promise she let him give her two children. The two years have passed by and the children are there and she will no longer allow him to have anything to do with her, for fear of having a third child."

"Can't the prince find her a husband?"

"He did find her a lieutenant, but she won't hear of anybody under the rank of major."

The prince gave a state dinner to General Woyakoff (for whom I had a letter), Baroness Korff, Madame Ittinoff and a young lady who was going to marry Baron Budberg, whom I had known in Florence, Turin and Augsburg and whom I may possibly have forgotten to mention.

All these friends helped me spend three weeks very pleasantly and I was especially pleased with old General Woyakoff. This worthy man had been in Venice fifty years before, when the Russians were still called

Muscovites and the founder of St. Petersburg was still alive. He had grown old like an oak, without changing his horizons. He thought the world was just the same as it had been when he was young, and was eloquent in his praise of the Venetian Government, imagining it to be still the same as he had left it.

At Riga an English merchant named Collins told me that the so-called Baron de Stenau, who had given me the forged bill of exchange, had been hanged in Portugal. This "baron" was a poor clerk, a son of a small tradesman, and had left his desk in search of adventure and thus he had ended. May God have mercy on his soul!

One evening a Russian on his way from Poland, where he had been executing some commission for the Russian Court, called on the prince, played and lost twenty thousand roubles on his word of honour. Campioni was the dealer. The Russian gave bills of exchange in payment of his debts; but, as soon as he got to St. Petersburg, he dishonoured his own bills and declared them worthless, not caring for his honour or good faith. The result of this piece of knavery was not only that his creditors were defrauded, but gaming was thenceforth strictly forbidden in the officers' quarters.

This Russian was the same who betrayed the secrets of Elizabeth Petrovna when she was at war with Prussia. He communicated to Peter, the Empress's nephew and heir-presumptive, all the orders she sent to her generals and Peter in his turn passed on the information to the Prussian king, whom he worshipped.

On the death of Elizabeth, Peter put this traitor at the head of the department of commerce and the fellow actually made known with the Czar's sanction the service for which he had received such a reward and thus, instead of looking upon his conduct as disgraceful, he gloried in it. Peter could not have been aware of the fact that, though it is sometimes necessary to reward treachery, the traitor himself is always abhorred and despised.

I have remarked that it was Campioni who dealt, but he dealt for the prince, who held the bank. I had certain claims but, when I remarked that I expected nothing and would gladly sell my expectations for a hundred roubles, the prince took me at my word and gave me the amount immediately. Thus I was the only person who made any money by our night's play.

Catherine II, wishing to show herself to her new subjects (over whom she was in reality supreme, though she had put the ghost of a king in the person of Stanislas Poniatowski, her former favourite, on the throne of Poland), came to Riga and it was then I saw this great sovereign for the first time. I was a witness of the kindness and affability with which she treated the Livonian nobility and of the way in which she kissed upon the mouth the young ladies, who had to kiss her hand. She was surrounded by the Orloffs and by other nobles who had assisted in placing her on the throne. For the comfort and pleasure of her loyal subjects, the Empress graciously expressed her intention of holding a bank at faro of ten thousand roubles.

Instantly the table and cards were brought forward and the piles of gold placed in order. She took the cards, pretended to shuffle them and gave them to the first comer to cut. She had the pleasure of seeing her bank broken at the first deal and indeed this result was to be expected, as anybody not an absolute idiot could see how the cards were going. The next day the Empress set out for Mitau, where triumphal arches were erected in her honour. They were made of wood, as stone is scarce in Poland, and indeed there would not have been time to build stone arches.

The day after her arrival, great alarm prevailed, for news came that a revolution was ready to break out at St. Petersburg and some even said that it had begun. The rebels wished to have forth from his prison the hapless Ivan Ivanovitch, who had been proclaimed Emperor in his cradle and dethroned by Elizabeth Petrovna. Two officers to whom the guardianship of the prince had been confided had killed the poor innocent monarch when they saw that they would be overpowered.

The assassination of the innocent prince created such a sensation that the wary Panin, fearing for the results, sent courier after courier to the Empress, urging her to return to St. Petersburg and show herself to the people. Catherine was thus obliged to leave Mitau twenty-four hours after she had entered it and, after hastening back to the capital, she arrived only to find that the excitement had entirely subsided. For politic reasons the assassins of the wretched Ivan were rewarded and the bold man who had endeavoured to rise by her fall was beheaded.

The report ran that Catherine had concerted the whole affair with the assassins, but this was speedily set down as a calumny. The Czarina was strong-minded but neither cruel nor perfidious. When I saw her at Riga, she was thirty-five and had reigned two years. She was not precisely handsome, but nevertheless her appearance was pleasing, her expression kindly, and there was about her an air of calm and tranquillity which never left her.

At about the same time, a friend of Baron de Sainte-Hélène arrived from St. Petersburg, on his way to Warsaw. His name was Marquis Dragon, but he called himself d'Aragon. He came from Naples, was a great gamester and a skilled swordsman and was always ready to extricate himself from a difficulty by a duel. He had left St. Petersburg because the Orloffs had persuaded the Empress to prohibit games of chance. It was thought strange that the prohibition should come from the Orloffs, as gaming had been their principal means of gaining a livelihood before they entered on the more dangerous, and certainly not more honourable, profession of conspiracy. However, this measure was really a sensible one. Having been gamesters themselves, they knew that gamesters are mostly knaves and always ready to enter into any intrigue or conspiracy, provided it assures them some small gain; there could not have been better judges of gaming and its consequences than they were.

But, though a gamester may be a rogue, he may still have a good heart and it is only just to say that this was the case with the Orloffs.

Alexis gained in a tavern the slash which adorns his face, and the man who gave the blow had just lost to him a large sum of money and considered his opponent's success to be the result of dexterity rather than of Fortune. When Alexis became rich and powerful, instead of revenging himself, he hastened to make his enemy's fortune. This was nobly done.

Dragon, whose first principle was always to turn up the best card and whose second principle was never to shirk a duel, had gone to St. Petersburg in 1759 with the Baron de Sainte-Hélène. Elizabeth was still on the throne, but Peter, Duke of Holstein, the heir-presumptive, had already begun to loom large on the horizon. Dragon used to frequent the fencing-school where the prince was a frequent visitor, and there encountered all comers successfully. The duke was vexed and one day took up a foil and defied the Neapolitan marquis to a combat. Dragon accepted and was thoroughly beaten, while the duke went off in triumph, for he might say from thenceforth that he was the best fencer in St. Petersburg.

When the prince had gone, Dragon could not withstand the temptation of saying that he had let himself be beaten only for fear of offending his antagonist, and this boast soon got to the grand duke's ears. The great man was terribly enraged and swore he would have him banished from St. Petersburg if he did not use all his skill, and at the same time he sent an order to Dragon to be at the fencing-school the next day.

The impatient duke was the first to arrive and d'Aragon was not long in coming. The prince began reproaching him for what he had said the day before, but the Neapolitan, far from denying the fact, replied that he had felt himself obliged to show his respect for his prince by letting him pink him for upwards of two hours.

"Very good," said the duke, "but now it is your turn and, if you don't do your best, I will drive you from St. Petersburg."

"My lord, Your Highness shall be obeyed. I shall not allow you to touch me once, but I hope you will deign to take me under your protection."

The two champions passed the whole morning with the foils and the duke was hit a hundred times without being able to touch his antagonist. At last, convinced of Dragon's superiority, he threw down his foil and shook him by the hand and made him his fencer-in-ordinary with the rank of major in his regiment of Holsteiners.

Shortly after d'Aragon, having won the good graces of the duke, obtained leave to hold a bank at faro in his court and in three or four years he amassed a fortune of a hundred thousand roubles, which he took with him to the Court of King Stanislas, where games of all sorts were allowed. When he passed through Riga, Sainte-Hélène introduced him to Prince Charles, who begged him to call on him the next day and show his skill with the foils against himself and some of his friends. I had the honour to be of the number and thoroughly well he beat us, for his skill was that of a demon. I was vain enough to become angry

at being hit at every pass and I told him that I should not be afraid to meet him at a game of sharps. He was calmer and replied by taking my hand and saying, "With the naked sword I fence in quite another style and you are quite right not to fear anyone, for you fence very well."

D'Aragon set out for Warsaw the next day, but he unfortunately found the place occupied by more cunning Greeks than himself. In six months they had relieved him of his hundred thousand roubles, but such is the lot of gamesters; no craft can be more wretched than theirs.

A week before I left Riga, where I stayed two months, Campioni fled by favour of the good Prince Charles and in a few days the Baron de Sainte-Hélène followed him without taking leave of a noble army of creditors. He only wrote a letter to the Englishman Collins, to whom he owed a thousand crowns, telling him that, like an honest man, he had left his debts where he had contracted them. We shall hear more of these three persons in the course of two years.

Campioni left me his travelling carriage, which obliged me to use six horses on my journey to St. Petersburg. I was sorry to leave Betty and I kept up an epistolary correspondence with her mother throughout the whole of my stay in St. Petersburg.

I left Riga with the thermometer indicating fifteen degrees of frost but, though I travelled day and night, not leaving the carriage for the sixty hours for which my journey lasted, I did not feel the cold in the least. I had taken care to pay all the stages in advance and Marshal Braun, Governor of Livonia, had given me the proper passport. On the box seat was a French servant, who had begged me to allow him to wait on me for the journey in return for a seat beside the coachman. He kept his word and served me well and, though he was ill-clad, he bore the horrible cold for two days and three nights without appearing to feel it. It is only a Frenchman who can bear such trials; a Russian in similar attire would have frozen to death in twenty-four hours, despite plentiful doses of corn brandy.

I lost sight of this individual when I arrived at St. Petersburg, but I met him again three months after, richly dressed and occupying a seat beside mine at the table of M. de Czernitscheff. He was the *uchitel* of the young count, who sat beside him. But I shall have occasion to speak more at length of the office of *uchitel*, or tutor, in Russia.

As for Lambert, who was beside me in the carriage, he did nothing but eat, drink and sleep the whole way, seldom speaking, for he stammered and could talk only about mathematical problems, on which I was not always in the humour to converse. He was never amusing, never had any sensible observation to make on the varied scenes through which we passed; in short, he was a fool and wearisome to all save himself.

I was stopped only once and that was at Narva, where the authorities demanded a passport, which I did not possess. I told the governor that, as I was a Venetian and travelled only for pleasure, I did not conceive

a passport would be necessary, my Republic not being at war with any other power and Russia having no embassy in Venice.

"Nevertheless," I added, "if your excellency wills it, I will turn back, but I shall complain to Marshal Braun, who gave me the passport for posting, knowing that I had not the political passport."

After rubbing his forehead for a minute, the governor gave me a pass, which I still possess and which brought me into St. Petersburg without my having to allow the custom-house officers to inspect my trunks.

Between Koporie and St. Petersburg there is only a wretched hut for the accommodation of travellers. The country is a wilderness and the inhabitants do not even speak Russian. The district is called Ingria and I believe the jargon spoken has no affinity with any other language. The principal occupation of the peasants is robbery and the traveller does well not to leave any of his effects alone for a moment.

I got to St. Petersburg just as the first rays of the sun began to gild the horizon. It was in the winter solstice and the sun rose at the extremity of an immense plain at twenty-four minutes past nine, so I am able to state that the longest night in Russia consists of eighteen hours and three quarters.

I got down in a fine street called the Million. I found a couple of empty rooms, which the people of the house furnished with two beds, four chairs and two small tables and rented to me very cheaply. Seeing the enormous stoves, I concluded they must consume a vast amount of wood, but I was mistaken. Russia is the land of stoves, as Venice is that of cisterns. I have inspected the interior of these stoves in summer-time as minutely as if I wished to find out the secret of making them; they are twelve feet high by six broad and are capable of warming a vast room. They are refuelled only once in twenty-four hours, for, as soon as the wood is reduced to the state of charcoal, a valve is shut in the upper part of the stove.

It is only in the houses of noblemen that the stoves are refuelled twice a day, because servants are strictly forbidden to close the valve and for a very good reason.

If a gentleman chance to come home and order his servants to warm his room before he goes to bed and if the servant is careless enough to close the valve before the wood is reduced to charcoal, then the master sleeps his last sleep, being suffocated in three or four hours. When the door is opened in the morning, he is found dead and the poor devil of a servant is immediately hanged, whatever he may say. This sounds severe and even cruel; but it is a necessary regulation or else a servant would be able to get rid of his master on the smallest provocation.

After I had made an agreement for my board and lodging, both of which were very cheap (St. Petersburg is now as dear as London), I bought some pieces of furniture which were necessities for me, but which were not as yet much in use in Russia, such as a commode, a bureau, etc.

German is the language principally spoken in St. Petersburg and I did not speak German much better than I do now, so I had a good deal of difficulty in making myself understood and usually excited my auditors to laughter.

After dinner my landlord told me that the Court was giving a masked ball to five thousand persons, to last sixty hours. He gave me a ticket and told me I needed only to show it at the entrance of the Imperial Palace.

I decided to use the ticket, for I felt that I should like to be present at so numerous an assembly and, as I had my domino still by me, a mask was all I lacked. I went to the palace in a sedan-chair and found an immense crowd assembled and dancing going on in several halls, in each of which an orchestra was stationed. There were long counters loaded with eatable and drinkables, at which those who were hungry or thirsty ate or drank as much as they liked. Gaiety and freedom reigned everywhere and the light of a thousand wax candles illuminated the hall. Everything was wonderful and all the more so from its contrast with the cold and darkness without. All at once I heard a masquer beside me say to another, "There's the Czarina."

We soon saw Gregory Orloff, for his orders were to follow the Empress at a distance.

I followed the masquer and was soon persuaded that it was really the Empress, for everybody was repeating it, though no one openly recognised her. Those who really did not know her jostled her in the crowd and I imagined that she would be delighted at being treated thus, as it was a proof of the success of her disguise. Several times I saw her speaking in Russian to one masquer and another. No doubt she exposed her vanity to some rude shocks, but she had also the inestimable advantage of hearing truths which her courtiers would certainly not tell her. The masquer who was pronounced to be Orloff followed her everywhere and did not let her out of his sight for a moment. He could not be mistaken, as he was an exceptionally tall man and had a peculiar carriage of the head.

I arrested my progress in a hall where the French square dance was being performed, and suddenly there appeared a masquer disguised in the Venetian style. The costume was so complete that I at once set him down as a fellow countryman, for very few strangers can imitate us so as to escape detection. As it happened, he came and stood next to me.

"One would think you were a Venetian," I said to him in French.

"So I am."

"Like myself."

"I am not jesting."

"No more am I."

"Then let us speak in Venetian."

"Do you begin and I will reply."

We began our conversation but, when he came to the word "subotta," Saturday, which is "sabo" in Venetian, I discovered that he was in-

deed a Venetian, but not from Venice itself. He said I was right and that he judged from my accent that I came from Venice.

"Quite so," said I.

"I thought Bernardi was the only Venetian besides myself in St. Petersburg."

"You see you are mistaken."

"My name is Count Volpati di Treviso"

"Give me your address and I will come and tell you who I am, for I cannot do so here."

"Here it is."

After leaving the count, I continued my progress through this wonderful ball and two or three hours after I was attracted by the voice of a female masquer speaking Parisian French in a high falsetto, such as is common at an opera ball.

I did not recognize the voice but I knew the style and felt quite certain that the masquer must be one of my old friends, for she spoke with the intonations and phraseology which I had rendered popular in my chief places of resort in Paris.

I was curious to see who it could be and, not wishing to speak before I knew her, I had the patience to wait till she lifted her mask; this occurred at the end of an hour. What was my surprise to see Madame Baret, the stocking-seller of the Rue Saint-Honoré! My love awoke from its long sleep and, coming up to her, I said, in a falsetto voice, "I am your friend of the Hôtel d'Elbeuf."

She was puzzled and looked the picture of bewilderment. I whispered in her ear, "Gilbert, Baret, rue des Prouvères," and certain other facts which could be known only to herself and a fortunate lover.

She saw I knew her inmost secrets and, drawing me away, she begged me to tell her who I was.

"I was your lover and a fortunate one, too," I replied. "But, before I tell you my name, with whom are you and how are you?"

"Very well; but pray do not divulge what you know about me. I left Paris with M. d'Anglade, counsellor at the parliament of Rouen. I lived happily enough for some time with him and then left him to go with a theatrical manager, who brought me here as an actress, under the name of de l'Anglade, and now I am kept by Count Rzewuski, the Polish ambassador. Now tell me who you are."

Feeling sure of enjoying her again, I lifted my mask. She gave a cry of joy and exclaimed, "My good angel brought you to St. Petersburg!"

"How do you mean?"

"Rzewuski is obliged to go back to Poland and now I count on you to get me out of the country, for I can no longer continue in a station for which I was not intended, since I can neither sing nor act."

She gave me her address and I left her, delighted with my discovery. After having passed half an hour at the counter, eating and drinking of the best, I returned to the crowd and saw my fair stocking-seller talking to Count Volpati. He had seen her with me and hastened to inquire my name of her. However, she was faithful to our mutual

promise and told him I was her husband, though the Venetian did not seem to give the least credence to this piece of information.

At last I was tired and left the ball and went to bed, intending to go to mass in the morning. I slept for some time and awoke, but, as it was still dark, I turned on the other side and went to sleep again. At last I awoke again and, seeing the daylight stealing through my double windows, I sent for a hairdresser, telling my man to make haste, as I wanted to hear mass on the first Sunday after my arrival in St. Petersburg.

"But, sir," said he, "the first Sunday was yesterday; it is Monday now."

"What! Monday?"

"Yes, sir."

I had spent twenty-seven hours in bed and, after laughing at the mishap, I felt as if I could easily believe it, for my hunger was like that of a cannibal.

This is the only day which I really lost in my life; but I do not weep, like the Roman emperor; I laugh. But this is not the only difference between Titus and Casanova.

I called on Demetrio Papanelopulo, the Greek merchant, who was to pay me a hundred roubles a month. I was also commended to him by M. da Loglio and I had an excellent reception. He begged me to come and dine with him every day, paid me the roubles for the month due and assured me he had honoured my bill drawn at Mitau. He also found me a reliable servant and a carriage at eighteen roubles, or six ducats, per month. Such cheapness has, alas, departed forever.

The next day, as I was dining with the worthy Greek and young Bernardi, who was afterwards poisoned, Count Volpati came in at the dessert and told us how he had met a Venetian at the ball who had promised to come to see him.

"The Venetian would have kept his promise," said I, "if he had not had a long sleep of twenty-seven hours. I am the Venetian and am delighted to continue our acquaintance."

The count was about to leave and his departure had already been announced in the St. Petersburg *Gazette*. The Russian custom is not to give a traveller his passports till a fortnight has elapsed after the public has been informed of his departure. This regulation is for the advantage of tradesmen, while it makes foreigners think twice before they contract any debts.

The next day I took a letter of introduction to M. Pietro Ivanovitch Melissino, colonel and afterwards general of artillery. The letter was written by Madame da Loglio, who was very intimate with Melissino. I was most politely welcomed and, after presenting me to his pleasant wife, he asked me once for all to sup with him every night. The house was managed in the French style and both play and supper were conducted without any ceremony. I met there Melissino's elder brother, the procurator of the Holy Synod and husband of the Princess Dolgorouki. Faro went on and the company was composed of trust-

worthy persons, who neither boasted of their gains nor bewailed their losses to anyone, and so there was no fear of the Government discovering this infringement of the law against gaming. The bank was held by Baron Lefort, son of the celebrated admiral of Peter the Great. Lefort was an example of the inconstancy of fortune; he was then in disgrace on account of a lottery which he had held in Moscow to celebrate the coronation of the Empress, who had furnished him with the necessary funds. The lottery had been broken and the fact was attributed to the baron's supposed dishonesty.

I played for small stakes and won a few roubles. I made friends with Baron Lefort at supper and he afterwards told me of the vicissitudes he had experienced.

As I was praising the noble calmness with which a certain prince had lost a thousand roubles to him, he laughed and said that the fine gamester I had mentioned played on credit but never paid.

"How about his honour?"

"It is not affected by the non-payment of gaming debts. It is an understood thing in Russia that one who plays on credit and loses may pay or not, as he wishes, and the winner only makes himself ridiculous by reminding the loser of his debt."

"Then the holder of the bank has the right to refuse to accept bets which are not backed by ready money."

"Certainly, and nobody has a right to be offended with him for doing so. Gaming is in a very bad state in Russia. I know young men of the highest rank whose chief boast is that they know how to conquer Fortune, that is, to cheat. One of the Matuschkins goes so far as to challenge all foreign cheats to master him. He has just received permission to travel for three years and it is an open secret that he wishes to travel in order to exercise his skill. He intends returning to Russia laden with the spoils of the dupes he has made."

A young officer of the guards, named Zinovieff, a relative of the Orloffs, whom I had met at Melissino's, introduced me to Macartney, the English ambassador, a young man of parts and fond of pleasure. He had fallen in love with a young lady of the Chitroff family and maid of honour to the Empress and, finding his affection reciprocated, a baby was the result. The Empress disapproved strongly of this piece of English freedom and had the ambassador recalled, though she forgave her maid of honour. This forgiveness was attributed to the young lady's skill in dancing. I knew the brother of this lady, a fine and intelligent young officer. I had the good fortune to be admitted to the Court and there I had the pleasure of seeing Mademoiselle Chitroff dance and also Mademoiselle Sievers, now Princess —, whom I saw again in Dresden four years ago with her daughter, an extremely genteel young princess. I was enchanted with Mademoiselle Sievers and fell quite in love with her but, as we were never introduced, I had no opportunity of declaring my passion. Putini, the *castrato*, was high in her favour, as indeed he deserved to be, both for his talents and for the beauties of his person.

The worthy Papanelopulo introduced me to Alsuvieff, one of the ministers, a man of wit and letters and the only one of the kind whom I met in Russia. He had been an industrious student at the University of Upsala, and loved wine, women and good cheer. He invited me to dine at Locatelli's at Catherinhoff, one of the imperial mansions, which the Empress had assigned to the old theatrical manager for the remainder of his days. He was astonished to see me and I was more astonished still to find that he had turned taverner, for he gave an excellent dinner every day to all who cared to pay a rouble, exclusive of wine. M. d'Alsuvieff introduced me to his colleague in the ministry, Teploff, whose vice was that he loved boys and his virtue, that he had strangled Peter III, who by drinking lime juice had withstood the arsenic they gave him to swallow.

Madame Mécour, the dancer, introduced me to her lover, Ghelaghin, also a minister. He had spent twenty years of his life in Siberia.

A letter from Da Loglio got me a warm welcome from the *castrato* Luini, a delightful man, who kept a splendid table. He was the lover of Colonna, the singer, but their affection seemed to me a torment, for they could scarce live together in peace for a single day. At Luini's house I met another *castrato*, Millico, a great friend of the chief huntsman, Narischkin, who also became one of my friends. This Narischkin, a pleasant and a well informed man, was the husband of the famous Maria Paulovna.

It was at the chief huntsman's splendid table that I met the *calogero* Plato, now archbishop of Novgorod, then chaplain to the Empress. This monk was a Russian and a master of ruses, understood Greek, spoke Latin and French and was what would be called a fine man. It was no wonder that he rose to such a height, as in Russia the nobility never lower themselves by accepting church dignities.

Da Loglio had given me a letter for the Princess Daschkoff and I took it to her country house at a distance of three versts from St. Petersburg. She had been exiled from the capital because, having assisted Catherine to ascend the throne, she claimed to share it with her.

I found the princess mourning the loss of her husband. She welcomed me kindly and promised to speak to M. Panin on my behalf; three days later she wrote me that I could call on that nobleman as soon as I liked. This was a specimen of the Empress's magnanimity; she had disgraced the princess but allowed her favourite minister to pay his court to her every evening. I have heard on good authority that Panin was not the princess's lover, but her father. She is now the President of the Academy of Science and I suppose the *literati* must look upon her as another Minerva or else they would be ashamed to have a woman at their head. For completeness' sake the Russians should get a woman to command their armies, but Jeanne d'Arcs are scarce.

Melissino and I were present at an extraordinary ceremony on the

Day of the Epiphany, namely, the blessing of the Neva, then covered with five feet of ice.

After the benediction of the waters, children were baptised by being plunged into a large hole which had been made in the ice. On the day on which I was present, the priest happened to let one of the children slip through his hands.

"*Drugoi!*" he cried.

That is, "Give me another." But my surprise may be imagined when I saw that the father and mother of the child were in an ecstasy of joy; they were certain that the babe had been carried straight to Heaven. Happy ignorance!

I had a letter from the Florentine Madame Bregonci for her friend, the Venetian Riccolini, who had left Venice to go and sing at the St. Petersburg Theatre, though she did not know a note of music and had never appeared on the stage. The Empress laughed at her and said she feared there was no opening in St. Petersburg for her peculiar talents, but the Riccolini, who was known as La Vicenza, was not the woman to lose heart for so small a check. She became an intimate friend of a Frenchwoman named Proté, who was the wife of a merchant and lived with the chief huntsman, being at the same time his mistress and the confidante of his wife, Maria Petrovna, who did not like her husband and was very much obliged to the Frenchwoman for delivering her from the conjugal importunities.

This Proté was one of the handsomest women I have ever seen and undoubtedly the handsomest in St. Petersburg at that time. She was in the flower of her age. She had a wonderful taste both for gallantry and for all the mysteries of the toilette. In dress she surpassed everyone and, as she was witty and amusing, she captivated all hearts. Such was the woman whose friend and procuress La Vicenza had become. She received the applications of those who were in love with Madame Proté and passed them on, while whether a lover's suit was accepted or not, the procuress got something out of him.

I recognised Signora Riccolini as soon as I saw her but, as twenty years had elapsed since our last meeting, she did not wonder at my appearing not to know her and made no effort to refresh my memory. Her brother was called Montellato and he it was who tried to assassinate me one night in St. Mark's Square, as I was leaving the Ridotto. The plot, which would have cost me my life if I had not made my escape from the window, was laid in La Riccolini's house.

She welcomed me as a fellow countryman in a strange land, told me of her struggles and added that now she had an easy life of it and associated with the pleasantest ladies in St. Petersburg.

"I am astonished that you have not met the fair Madame Proté at the chief huntsman's, for she is the darling of his heart. Come and take coffee with me to-morrow and you shall see a wonder."

I kept the appointment and found the lady even more beautiful than the Venetian's praises of her had led me to expect. I was dazzled by her beauty but, not being a rich man, I felt that I must set my wits to

work if I wanted to enjoy her. I asked her name, though I knew it quite well, and she replied, "Proté."

"I am glad to hear it, madame," said I, "for you thereby promise to be mine."

"How so?" said she, with a charming smile. I explained the pun and made her laugh. I told her amusing stories and let her know the effect that her beauty had produced on me and that I hoped time would soften her heart to me. The acquaintance was made and thenceforth I never went to Narischkin's without calling on her either before or after dinner.

The Polish ambassador returned about that time and I had to forego my enjoyment of the fair Anglade, who accepted a very advantageous proposal made her by Count Braun. This charming Frenchwoman died of the smallpox a few months later and there can be no doubt that her death was a blessing, as she would have fallen into misery and poverty after her beauty had once decayed.

I desired to succeed with Madame Proté and, with that idea, I asked her to dinner at Locatelli's with Luini, Colonna, Zinovieff, Signora Vicenza and a violinist, her lover. We had an excellent dinner, washed down with plenty of wine, and the spirits of the company were wound up to the pitch I desired. After the repast each gentleman went aside with his lady and I was on the point of success when an untoward accident interrupted us. We were summoned to see the proofs of Luini's prowess; he had gone out shooting with his dogs and guns.

As I was walking away from Catherinhoff with Zinovieff, I noticed a young country woman whose beauty astonished me. I pointed her out to the young officer and we made for her, but she fled away with great activity to a little cottage, where we followed her. We went in and saw the father, mother and some children and in a corner the timid form of the fair maiden.

Zinovieff (who, by the way, was for twenty years Russian ambassador in Madrid) had a long conversation in Russian with the father. I did not understand what was said but guessed it referred to the girl because, when her father called her, she advanced submissively and stood modestly before us.

The conversation over, Zinovieff went out and I followed him, after giving the master of the house a rouble. Zinovieff told me what had passed, saying that he had asked the father if he would let him have the daughter as a maidservant and the father had replied that it would be so with all his heart, but that he must have a hundred roubles for her, as she was still a virgin. "So you see," added Zinovieff, "the matter is quite simple."

"How 'simple'?"

"Why, yes; only a hundred roubles."

"And supposing me to be inclined to give that sum?"

"Then she would be your servant and you could do anything you liked with her except kill her."

"And supposing she is not willing?"

"That never happens but, if it did, you could have her beaten."

"Well, if she is satisfied and I enjoy her, can I still continue to keep her?"

"You will be her master, I tell you, and can have her arrested if she attempts to escape, unless she can return the hundred roubles you gave for her."

"What must I give her per month?"

"Nothing, except enough to eat and drink. You must also let her go to the baths on Saturday and to church on Sunday."

"Can I make her come with me when I leave St. Petersburg?"

"No, unless you obtain permission and find a surety, for, though the girl would be your slave, she would still be a slave to the Empress."

"Very good; then will you arrange this matter for me? I will give the hundred roubles and I promise you I will not treat her as a slave. But I hope you will care for my interests, as I do not wish to be duped."

"I promise you, you shall not be duped; I will see to everything. Would you like her now?"

"No, to-morrow."

We returned to St. Petersburg in a phaeton and the next day at nine o'clock I called on Zinovieff, who said he was delighted to do me this small service. On the way he said that, if I liked, he could get me a perfect seraglio of pretty girls in a few days.

"No," said I, "one is enough." And I gave him the hundred roubles.

We arrived at the cottage, where we found the father, mother and daughter. Zinovieff explained his business rather crudely after the custom of the country, and the father thanked St. Nicholas for the good luck he had sent him. He spoke to his daughter, who looked at me and softly uttered the necessary "yes."

Zinovieff then told me I ought to ascertain that I was going to pay for a virgin. I was afraid of offending her and would have nothing to do with it; but Zinovieff said the girl would be mortified if I did not and that she would be delighted if I placed her in a position to prove before her father and mother that her conduct had always been virtuous. I therefore ascertained the facts as modestly as I could, and found her to be intact. To tell the truth, I should not have said anything if things had been otherwise.

Zinovieff then gave the hundred roubles to the father, who handed them to his daughter and she took them only to return them to her mother. My servant and coachman were then called in to witness an arrangement of which they knew nothing.

I called her Zaire and she got into the carriage and returned with me to St. Petersburg in her coarse clothes, without a chemise of any kind. After I had dropped Zinovieff at his lodging, I went home and for four days I was engaged in collecting and arranging my slave's toilette, not resting till I had dressed her modestly in the French style. In less than three months she had learnt enough Italian to tell me what she wanted and to understand me. She soon loved me and afterwards she got jealous. But we shall hear more of her in the following chapter.

THE day on which I took Zaïre, I dismissed Lambert, for I did not know what to do with him. He got drunk every day and, when in his cups, he was unbearable. Nobody would have anything to do with him except as a common soldier and that is not an enviable position in Russia. I got him a passport for Berlin and gave him enough money for the journey. I heard afterwards that he entered the Austrian service.

In May Zaire had become so beautiful that, when I went to Moscow, I dared not leave her behind so I took her in place of a servant. It was delicious to me to hear her chattering in the Venetian dialect I had taught her. On a Saturday I would go with her to the Russian baths to bathe with thirty or forty men and women, quite naked, but, as no one looks at anyone else, he fancies he is not seen by anyone but himself.

This absence of shame must arise, I should imagine, from native innocence; but I wondered that none looked at Zaïre, who seemed to me the original of the statue of Psyche I had seen at the Villa Borghese in Rome. She was only fourteen, so her bosom was not yet developed and she bore about her few traces of puberty. Her skin was as white as snow and her ebon tresses covered the whole of her body, save in a few places where the dazzling whiteness of her skin shone through. Her eyebrows were perfectly shaped and her eyes, though they might have been larger, could not have been more brilliant or more expressive. If it had not been for her furious jealousy and her blind confidence in fortune-telling by cards, which she consulted every day, Zaire would have been a paragon among women and I should never have left her.

A young and distinguished-looking Frenchman came to St. Petersburg with a young Parisian named La Rivière, who was tolerably pretty but devoid of good breeding except such as is common to all the girls who sell their charms in Paris. This young man came to me with a letter from Prince Charles of Courland, who said that if I could do anything for the young couple, he would be grateful to me. They arrived just as I was breakfasting with Zaire.

"You must tell me," said I to the young Frenchman, "in what way I can be of use to you."

"By admitting us to your company and introducing us to your friends."

"Well, I am a stranger here and I will come and see you and you can come to see me and I shall be delighted, but I never dine at home. As to my friends, you must understand that, being a stranger, I could not introduce you and the lady. Is she your wife? People will ask me who you are and what you are doing in St. Petersburg. What am I to say? I wonder Prince Charles did not send you to someone else."

"I am a gentleman of Lorraine and Madame la Rivière is my mistress and my object in coming to St. Petersburg is to amuse myself."

"Then I don't know to whom I could introduce you under the circumstances, but I should think you would be able to find plenty of

amusement without knowing anyone. The theatres, the streets and even the Court entertainments are open to everyone. I suppose you have plenty of money?"

"That's exactly what I haven't and I don't expect any, either."

"Well, I haven't much more, but you really astonish me. How could you have been so foolish as to come here without money?"

"Well, my mistress said we could do with what money we got from day to day. She induced me to leave Paris without a farthing and up to now it seems to me she is right. We have managed to get on somehow."

"Then she has the purse?"

"My purse," said she, "is in the pockets of my friends."

"I understand and I am sure you have no difficulty in finding the wherewithal to live. If I had such a purse, it would be opened for you, but I am not a rich man."

Bomback, a citizen of Hamburg whom I had known in England, whence he had fled on account of his debts, had come to St. Petersburg and entered the army. He was the son of a rich merchant and kept up a house, a carriage and an army of servants; he was a lover of good cheer, women and gaming and contracted debts everywhere. He was an ugly man but full of wit and energy. He happened to call on me just as I was addressing the strange traveller whose purse was in the pocket of her friends. I introduced the couple to him, telling the whole story, the item of the purse excepted. The adventure was just to Bomback's taste and he began making advances to Madame la Rivière, who received them in a thoroughly professional spirit; I was inwardly amused and felt that her axiom was a true one. Bomback invited them to dine with him the next day and begged them to come and take an informal dinner with him that same day at Cransnacaback. I was included in the invitation and Zaire, not understanding French, asked me what we were talking about and, on my telling her, expressed a desire to accompany me. I gave in to appease her, for I knew the wish proceeded from jealousy and that, if I did not consent, I should be tormented by tears, ill humour, reproaches, melancholy, etc. This had occurred several times before and so violent had she been that I had been compelled to conform to the custom of the country and beat her. Strange to say, I could not have taken a better way to prove my love. Such is the character of the Russian women. After the blows had been given, by slow degrees she became affectionate again and a love encounter sealed the reconciliation.

Bomback left us to make his preparations in high spirits and, while Zaire was dressing, Madame la Rivière talked in such a manner as almost to make me think that I was absolutely deficient in knowledge of the world. The astonishing thing was that her lover did not seem in the least ashamed of the part he had to play. He might say that he was in love with the Messalina, but the excuse would not have been admissible.

The party was a merry one. Bomback talked to the adventuress,

Zaïre sat on my lap and Crève-cœur ate and drank, laughed in season and out of season and walked up and down. The crafty Madame la Rivière incited Bomback to risk twenty-five roubles at *quinze*; he lost and paid pleasantly and got only a kiss for his money. Zaire, who was delighted to be able to watch over me and my fidelity, jested pleasantly on the Frenchwoman and the complaisance of her lover. This was altogether beyond her comprehension and she could not understand how he could bear such deeds as were done before his face.

The next day I went to Bomback's by myself, as I was sure of meeting young Russian officers, who would have annoyed me by making love to Zaire in their own language. I found the two travellers and the brothers Lunin, then lieutenants but now generals. The younger of them was as fair and pretty as any girl. He had been the beloved of the minister Teploff and, like a lad of wit, he not only was not ashamed but openly boasted that it was his custom to secure the good will of all men by his caresses.

He had imagined the rich citizen of Hamburg to be of the same tastes as Teploff and he had not been mistaken; and he would have thought to degrade me by not forming the same supposition. With this idea, he seated himself next to me at table and behaved in such a manner during dinner that I began to believe him to be a girl in man's clothes.

The elder Lunin, Crève-cœur and Bomback, who had been for a walk, returned at nightfall with two or three friends and easily consoled the Frenchman for the poor entertainment the younger Lunin and myself had given him.

Bomback held a bank at faro, which did not come to an end until eleven, when the money was all gone. We then supped and the real orgy began, of which La Rivière bore the brunt in a manner that was simply astonishing. I and my new friend, the younger Lunin, were merely spectators and poor Crève-cœur had gone to bed. We did not separate till daybreak.

I got home and, fortunately for myself, escaped the bottle which Zaïre flung at my head and which would infallibly have killed me if it had hit me. She threw herself on the ground and began to strike it with her forehead. I thought she had gone mad and wondered whether I had better call for assistance; but she became quiet enough to call me "assassin" and "traitor," with all the other abusive epithets she could remember. To convict me of my crime, she showed me twenty-five cards, placed in order, and on them she had me read the various enormities of which I had been guilty.

I let her go on till her rage was somewhat exhausted and then, having thrown her divining apparatus into the fire, I looked at her in pity and anger and said that we must part the next day, as she had narrowly escaped killing me. I admitted that I had spent the night at Bomback's and that there had been a girl in the house, but I denied all the other sins of which she accused me. I then went to sleep without taking the slightest notice of her, in spite of all she said and did to prove her repentance.

I woke after a few hours, to find her sleeping soundly, and I began to consider how I could best rid myself of the girl, who would probably kill me if we continued living together. Whilst I was absorbed in these thoughts, she awoke and, falling at my feet, wept and professed her utter repentance and promised never to touch another card as long as I kept her. In this state a woman who is beautiful and whom one loves is a powerful temptress.

At last I could resist her entreaties no longer, so I took her in my arms and forgave her and we did not part till she had received undeniable proofs of the return of my affection. I intended to start for Moscow in three days and she was delighted when she heard that I would take her with me.

Three circumstances had won me this young girl's furious affection. In the first place, I took her often to see her family, with whom I always left a rouble; in the second, I had her eat with me; and, in the third, I had beaten her three or four times when she had tried to prevent me from going out.

In Russia beating is a matter of necessity, for words have no force whatever. A servant, mistress or courtesan understands nothing but the lash. Words are altogether thrown away, but a few good strokes are entirely efficacious. The servant whose soul is still more enslaved than his body reasons somewhat as follows, after he has had a beating, "My master has not sent me away but beaten me; therefore he loves me and I ought to be attached to him."

It is the same with the Russian soldier and, in fact, with everybody. Honour stands for nothing, but, with the knout and brandy, one can get anything from them except heroic enthusiasm.

Papanelopulo laughed at me when, at the beginning of my stay, I said that, as I liked my Cossack, I would endeavour to correct him with words only when he took too much brandy.

"If you do not beat him," he said, "he will end by beating you." And he spoke the truth.

One day, when he was so drunk as to be unable to attend me, I began to scold him and threatened him with the stick if he did not mend his ways. As soon as he saw my cane lifted, he ran at me and got hold of it and, if I had not knocked him down immediately, he would doubtless have beaten me. I dismissed him on the spot. There is not a better servant in the world than a Russian. He works without ceasing, sleeps in front of the door of his master's bedroom, to be always ready to fulfill his orders, never answering his reproaches and incapable of theft. But, after drinking a little too much brandy, he becomes a perfect monster, and drunkenness is the vice of the whole nation.

A coachman knows no other way of resisting the bitter cold to which he is exposed than by drinking rye brandy. It sometimes happens that he drinks till he falls asleep and then there is no awaking for him in this world. Unless one is very careful, it is easy to lose an ear, the nose, a cheek or a lip by frostbites. One time, as I was walking out on a bitterly cold day, a Russian noticed that one of my ears was frozen.

He ran up to me and rubbed the affected part with a handful of snow till the circulation was restored. I asked him how he had noticed my state and he said he had remarked the livid whiteness of my ear and this, he said, was always a sign that the frost had taken it. What surprised me most of all is that sometimes the part grows again after it has dropped off. Prince Charles of Courland assured me that he had lost his nose in Siberia and it had grown again the next summer. I have been assured of the truth of this by several Russians.

About this time the Empress had the architect Rinaldi, who had been fifty years in St. Petersburg, build her an enormous wooden amphitheatre, so large as to cover the whole space in front of the palace. It would contain a hundred thousand spectators and in it Catherine intended to give a vast tournament to all the knights of her empire. There were to be four parties of a hundred knights each and all the cavaliers were to be clad in the national costume of the nations they represented. All the Russians were informed of this great festival, which was to be given at the expense of the sovereign, and the princes, counts and barons were already arriving with their chargers from the most remote parts of the Empire. Prince Charles of Courland wrote informing me of his intention to be present.

It had been ordained that the tournament should take place on the first day and this precaution was a very wise one, for, excepting in the season of the hard frosts, a day without rain or snow or wind is a marvel. In Italy, Spain and France one can reckon on fine weather, and bad weather is the exception, but it is quite the contrary in Russia. Ever since I have known this home of frost and the cold north wind, I laugh when I hear travelling Russians talking of the fine climate of their native country. However, it is a pardonable weakness; most of us prefer "mine" to "thine"; nobles affect to consider themselves of purer blood than the peasants from whom they sprang, and the Romans and other ancient nations pretended that they were the children of the gods in order to draw a veil over their actual ancestors, who were doubtless robbers. The truth is that, during the whole year 1765, there was not one fine day in Russia, or in Ingria at all events, and the incontestable proof of this statement may be found in the fact that the tournament was not held that year. It was postponed till the next and the princes, counts, barons and knights spent the winter in the capital, unless their purses forbade them to indulge in the luxuries of court life. My dear Prince of Courland was in this position, to my great disappointment.

Having made all arrangements for my journey to Moscow, I got into my sleeping-carriage with Zaïre, having a servant behind who could speak both Russian and German. For twenty-four roubles the *uzvoschic* (hirer-out of horses) engaged to carry me to Moscow in six days and seven nights, with six horses. This struck me as being extremely cheap. The distance is seventy-two Russian stages, almost equivalent to five hundred Italian miles or a hundred and sixty French leagues.

We set out just as a cannon shot from the citadel announced the close of day. It was towards the end of May, in which month there is liter-

ally no night in St. Petersburg. But for the report of the cannon, no one would be able to tell when the day ended and the night began. One can read a letter at midnight and the moonlight makes no appreciable difference. This continual day lasts eight weeks and during that time no one lights a candle. At Moscow it is different; a candle is always necessary at midnight if one wishes to read.

We reached Novgorod in forty-eight hours and here the *uzvoschic* allowed us a rest of five hours. I saw an incident there which surprised me very much, though one has no business to be surprised at anything if one travels much and especially in a land of half-savages. I asked the *uzvoschic* to drink, but he appeared to be in great melancholy. I inquired what was the matter and he told Zaire that one of his horses had refused to eat and that it was clear that, if he could not eat, he could not work. We followed him into the stable and found the horse low-spirited, its head drooping, motionless and with no appetite. Its master began a pathetic oration, looking tenderly at the animal, as if to arouse it to a sense of duty, and then, taking its head and kissing it lovingly, he put it into the manger, but to no purpose. Then the man began to weep bitterly, but in such a way that I had the greatest difficulty to prevent myself from laughing, for I could see that he wept in the hope that his tears might soften the brute's heart. When he had wept for some time, he again put the horse's head into the manger, but again to no purpose. At this, he got furious and swore to be avenged. He led the horse out of the stable, tied it to a post and beat it with a thick stick for a quarter of an hour so violently that my heart bled for the poor animal. At last the *uzvoschic* was tired out and, taking the horse back to the stable, he fastened up its head once more and, to my astonishment, it began to devour its provender with the greatest appetite. At this, the master jumped for joy, laughed, sang and committed a thousand extravagances, as if to show the horse how happy it had made him. I was beside myself with astonishment and concluded that such treatment would have succeeded nowhere but in Russia, where the stick seems to be the panacea, or universal medicine.

They tell me, however, that the stick is gradually going out of fashion. Peter the Great used to beat his generals black and blue and in his days a lieutenant had to receive with all submission the cuffs of his captain, who bent before the blows of his major, who did the same to his colonel, who received chastisement from his general. So I was informed by old General Woyakoff, who was a pupil of Peter the Great and had often been beaten by the great Emperor, the founder of St. Petersburg.

It seems to me that I have scarcely said anything about this great and famous capital, which in my opinion is built on somewhat precarious foundations. No one but an iron-willed genius like Peter could have thus given the lie to Nature by building his immense palaces of marble and granite on mud and shifting sand. They tell me that the town is now in its manhood, to the honour of the great Catherine; but in the year 1765 it was still in its minority and seemed to me to have been

built only with the childish aim of seeing it fall into ruins. Streets were built with the certainty of having to repair them in six months' time. The whole place proclaimed itself to be the whim of a despot. If it is to be durable, constant care will be required, for Nature never gives up her rights, but reasserts them when the constraint of man is withdrawn. My theory is that, sooner or later, the soil must give way and drag the vast city with it.

We reached Moscow in the time the *uzvoschic* had promised. As the same horses were used for the whole journey, it would have been impossible to travel more quickly. A Russian told me that the Empress Elizabeth had done the journey in fifty-two hours.

"You mean that she issued a ukase to the effect that she had done it," said a Russian of the old school, "and, if she had liked, she could have travelled more quickly still; it was only a question of the wording of the ukase."

Even when I was in Russia, it was not allowable to doubt the infallibility of a ukase and to do so was equivalent to high treason. One day I was crossing a canal in St. Petersburg by a small wooden bridge; Melissino, Papanelopulo and some other Russians were with me. I began to abuse the wooden bridge, which I characterised as both mean and dangerous. One of my companions said that, on such and such a day, it would be replaced by a fine stone bridge, as the Empress had to pass there on some state occasion. The day named was three weeks off and I said plainly that it was impossible. One of the Russians looked askance at me and said there was no doubt about it, as a ukase had been published ordering that the bridge should be built. I was going to answer him, but Papanelopulo gave my hand a squeeze and whispered "*Taci!*" (Hush!)

The bridge was not built, but I was not justified, for the Empress published another ukase in which she declared it to be her gracious pleasure that the bridge should not be built till the following year. If anyone would see what a pure despotism is like, let him go to Russia.

The Russian sovereigns use the language of despotism on all occasions. One day I saw the Empress, dressed in man's clothes, going out for a ride. Her master of the horse, Prince Repnin, held the bridle of the horse, which suddenly gave him a kick that broke his ankle bone. The Empress ordained that the horse should be taken away and that no one should mount it again under pain of death. All official positions in Russia have military rank assigned to them and this sufficiently indicates the nature of the government. The coachman-in-chief of Her Imperial Highness holds the rank of colonel, as does also her chief cook. The *castrato* Luini was a lieutenant-colonel and the painter Toretti only a captain because he had only eight hundred roubles a year, while the coachman had three thousand. The sentinels at the doors of the palace have their muskets crossed and ask those who wish to pass through what is their rank. When I was asked this question, I stopped short; but the quick-witted officer asked me how

much I had a year and, on my replying at a hazard, "three thousand roubles," he gave me the rank of general and I was allowed to pass. I saw the Czarina for a moment; she stopped at the door and took off her gloves to give her hands to be kissed by the officer and the two sentinels. By such means as this she had won the affection of the corps, commanded by Gregorius Gregorovitch Orloff, on which her safety depended in case of revolution.

I made the following notes when I saw the Empress hearing mass in her chapel: the *protopapa*, or bishop, received her at the door to give her the holy water and she kissed his episcopal ring, while the prelate, whose beard was a couple of feet in length, lowered his head to kiss the hands of his temporal sovereign and spiritual head, for in Russia the "he" or "she" on the throne is the spiritual as well as temporal head of the Church.

She did not evidence the least devotion during mass; hypocrisy did not seem to be one of her vices. She smiled now at one of her suite, now at another and occasionally addressed her favourite, not because she had anything to say to him, but to make him an object of envy to the others.

One evening, as she was leaving the theatre where Metastasio's *Olympiad* had been performed, I heard her say:

"The music of that opera has given the greatest pleasure to everyone, so of course I am delighted with it; but it bores me nevertheless. Music is a fine thing, but I cannot understand how anyone who is seriously occupied can love it passionately. I will have Buranelli here and I wonder whether he will interest me in music, but I am afraid Nature did not constitute me to feel all its charms."

She always argued in that way. In due time I will set down her words to me when I returned from Moscow. When I arrived at that city, I alighted at a good inn, where they gave me two rooms and a coach-house for my carriage. After dinner I hired a small carriage and a guide who could speak French. My carriage was drawn by four horses, for Moscow is a vast city composed of four distinct towns and many of the streets are rough and ill-paved. I had five or six letters of introduction and I determined to present them all. I took Zaïre with me, as she was as curious to see everything, as a girl of fourteen naturally is. I do not remember what feast the Greek Church was keeping on that day, but I shall never forget the terrific bell-ringing with which my ears were assailed, for there are churches everywhere. The country people were engaged in sowing their grain, to reap it in September. They laughed at our southern custom of sowing eight months earlier as unnecessary and even prejudicial to the crops, but I do not know where the right lies. Perhaps we may both be right, for there is no teacher to compare with experience.

I took the introductions I had received from Narischkin, Prince Repnin, the worthy Papanelopulo and Melissino's brother. The next morning every one of the persons at whose houses I had left letters called on me. They all asked Zaïre and me to dinner and I accepted the

the Roman Christians making the sign of the cross from left to right is that we say *spiritus sancti*, while they say *agion pneuma*.

"If you said *pneuma agion*," I used to say, "then you would cross yourselves like us and, if we said *sancti spiritus*, we would cross ourselves like you."

"The adjective," replied my interlocutor, "should always precede the substantive, for we should never utter the name of God without first giving Him some honourable epithet."

Such are nearly all the differences which divided the two churches, without reckoning the numerous idle tales which they have, as well as ourselves, and which are by no means the least cherished articles of their faith.

We returned to St. Petersburg by the way we had come, but Zaïre would have liked me never to leave Moscow. She had become so much in love with me by force of constant association that I could not think without a pang of the moment of separation. The day after our arrival in the capital, I took her to her home, where she showed her father all the little presents I had given her and told him of the honour she had received as my daughter, which made the good man laugh heartily.

The first piece of news I heard was that a ukase had been issued, ordering the erection of a temple dedicated to God in the Moscöi opposite the house where I resided. The Empress had entrusted Rinaldi, the architect, with the erection. He asked her what emblem he should put above the portal and she replied, "No emblem at all, only the name of God in large letters."

"I will put a triangle."

"No triangle at all; only the name of God in whatever language you like and nothing more."

The second piece of news was that Bomback had fled and had been captured in Mitau, where he had believed himself in safety. M. de Simolin had arrested him. It was a grave case, for he had deserted, however, he was given his life and sent into barracks in Kamchatka Crèveœur and his mistress had departed, carrying some money with them, and a Florentine adventurer named Biliotti had fled with eighteen thousand roubles belonging to Papanelopulo, but a certain Bori, the worthy Greek's factotum, had caught him in Mitau and brought him back to St. Petersburg, where he was now in prison. Prince Charles of Courland arrived about this time and I hastened to call upon him as soon as he advised me of his coming. He was lodging in a house belonging to Count Dimidoff, who owned large iron mines and had made the whole house of iron, from attic to basement. The prince had brought his mistress with him, but she was still in an ill humour and he was beginning to get heartily sick of her. The man was to be pitied, for he could not get rid of her without finding her a husband and this husband became more difficult to find every day. When the prince saw how happy I was with my Zaïre, he could not help thinking how easily happiness may be won, but the fatal desire for luxury and empty show spoils all and renders the very sweets of life as bitter as gall.

I was indeed considered happy and I liked to appear so, but in my heart I was wretched. Ever since my imprisonment under The Leads, I had been subject to hæmorrhoids, which came on three or four times a year. In St. Petersburg I had a serious attack and the daily pain and anxiety embittered my existence. A vegetarian doctor called Senapios, for whom I sent, gave me the sad news that I had a blind or incomplete fistula in the rectum and, according to him, nothing but the cruel bistoury would give me any relief and indeed he said I had no time to lose. I had to agree, in spite of my dislike of the operation; but fortunately the clever surgeon whom the doctor summoned declared that, if I would have patience, Nature itself would give me relief. I had much to endure, especially from the severe dieting to which I was subjected but which doubtless did me good.

Colonel Melissino asked me to be present at a review which was to take place three versts from St. Petersburg and was to be succeeded by a dinner to twenty-four guests, given by General Orloff. I went with the prince and saw a cannon fired twenty times in a minute, testing the performance with my watch.

My neighbour at dinner was the secretary of the French embassy. Wishing to drink deeply, after the Russian fashion, and thinking the Hungarian wine as innocent as champagne, he drank so bravely that at the end of dinner he had lost the use of his legs. Count Orloff made him drink still more and then he fell asleep and was laid on a bed.

The gaiety of the meal gave me some idea of Russian wit. I did not understand the language, so M. Zinovieff translated the curious sallies to me while the applause they had raised was still resounding.

Melissino rose to his feet, holding in his hand a large goblet full of Hungarian wine. There was a general silence to listen to him. He drank the health of General Orloff in these words, "May you die when you become rich!"

The applause was general, for the allusion was to Orloff's unbounded generosity. The general's reply struck me as better still, but it was equally rugged in character. He, too, took a full cup and, turning to Melissino, said, "May you never die till I slay you!"

The applause was furious, for he was their host and their general. Russian wit is of the energetic kind, devoid of grace; all they care out is directness and vigour.

Voltaire had just sent the Empress his *Philosophy of History*, which had written for her and dedicated to her. A month after an edition of three thousand copies came by sea and was sold out in a week, for the Russians who knew a little French were eager to possess a copy of the work. The leaders of the Voltaireans were two noblemen, named Stroganoff and Schuvaloff. I had seen verses written by the former as good as Voltaire's own verses, and twenty years later I saw an ode by the latter of which Voltaire would not have been ashamed. But the subject was ill-chosen, for it treated of the death of the great philosopher, who had so studiously avoided using his pen on melancholy themes. In those days all Russians with any pretensions to literature

read nothing but Voltaire and, when they had read all his writings, they thought themselves as wise as their master. To me they seemed pigmies mimicking a giant. I told them they ought to read all the books from which Voltaire had drawn his immense learning and then, perhaps, they might become as wise as he. I remember the saying of a Roman philosopher, "Beware of the man of one book." I wonder whether the Russians are more profound now, but that is a question I cannot answer. In Dresden I met Prince Biloselski, who, after having been ambassador in Turin, went back to Russia. This prince took it into his head to reduce the human understanding to geometrical terms; he analysed metaphysics; his little book classifies the soul and the mind and the more I read it, the more remarkable I find it to be. It is regrettable that in the hands of an atheist ill use might be made of it.

Count Panin was the tutor of Paul Petrovitch, heir-presumptive to the throne. The young prince had a severe master and dared not even applaud an air at the opera unless he first received permission to do so from his mentor.

When a courier brought the news of the sudden death of Francis I, Emperor of Germany and of the Holy Roman Empire, the Czarina being at Czarsko-Selo, the count minister-tutor was in the palace with his pupil, then eleven years old. The courier came at noon and gave the dispatch into the hands of the minister, who was standing in the midst of a crowd of courtiers, of whom I was one. The prince imperial was at his right hand. The minister read the dispatch in a low voice and then said:

"This is news indeed. The Emperor of the Romans has died suddenly."

He then turned to Paul and said to him, "Full court mourning, which Your Highness will observe for three months longer than the Empress."

"Why so?" said Paul.

"Because, as Duke of Holstein, Your Highness has a right to attend the Diet of the Empire—a privilege," he added, turning to us, "which Peter the Great desired in vain."

I noted the attention with which the Grand Duke Paul listened to his mentor and the care with which he concealed his joy at the news. I was immensely pleased with this way of giving instruction. I said as much to Prince Lobkowitz, who was standing by me, and he refined on my praises. This prince was popular with everyone. He was even preferred to his predecessor, Prince Esterhazy, and this was saying a great deal, for Esterhazy was adored in Russia. The gay and affable manner of Prince Lobkowitz made him the life and soul of all the parties at which he was present. He was a constant courtier of the Countess Braun, the reigning beauty, and everyone believed his love had been crowned with success, though no one could assert as much positively.

There was a great review held at a distance of twelve or fourteen versts from St. Petersburg, at which the Empress and all her train

of courtiers were present. The houses of the two or three adjoining villages were so few and small that it would be impossible for all the company to find a lodging. Nevertheless I wished to be present, chiefly to please Zaïre, who wanted to be seen with me on such an occasion. The review was to last three days; there were to be fireworks and a mine was to be exploded, besides the evolutions of the troops. I went in my travelling-carriage, which would serve me for a lodging if I could get nothing better.

We arrived at the appointed place at eight o'clock in the morning; the evolutions lasted till noon. When they were over, we went towards a tavern and had our meal served to us in the carriage, as all the rooms in the inn were full.

After dinner my coachman tried in vain to find me a lodging, so I disposed myself to sleep all night in the carriage; and so I did for the whole time of the review and fared better than those who had spent so much money to be ill-lodged. Melissino told me that the Empress thought my idea a very sensible one. As I was the only person who had a sleeping-carriage, which was quite a portable house in itself, I had numerous visitors and Zaïre was radiant to be able to do the honours.

I had a good deal of conversation during the review with Count Tott, brother of the nobleman who was employed in Constantinople, known as Baron Tott. We had known each other in Paris and afterwards at The Hague, where I had the pleasure of being of service to him. He had come to St. Petersburg with Madame de Soltikoff, whom he had met in Paris and whose lover he was. He lived with her, went to Court and was well received by everyone.

Two or three years after the Empress ordered him to leave St. Petersburg on account of the troubles in Poland. It was said that he was keeping up a correspondence with his brother, who was endeavouring to intercept the fleet under the command of Alexis Orloff. I never heard what became of him after he left Russia, where he obliged me with the loan of five hundred roubles, which I have not yet been able to return to him.

M Maruzzi, a Venetian merchant by calling and a Greek by birth, having left trade to live like a gentleman, came to St. Petersburg when I was there, and was presented at Court. He was a fine-looking man and was admitted to all the great houses. The Empress treated him with distinction because she had thoughts of making him her agent in Venice. He paid his court to the Countess Braun, but he had rivals there who were not afraid of him. He was rich enough, but did not know how to spend his money and avarice is a sin which meets with no pity from the Russian ladies.

I went to Czarsko-Selo, Peterhoff and Cronstadt, for, if you want to say you have been in a country, you should see as much as possible of it. I wrote notes and memoranda on several questions, with the hope of their procuring me a place in the civil service, and all my productions were laid before the Empress, but with no effect. In Russia they do not think much of foreigners unless they have specially summoned

them; those who come on their own account rarely make their fortune; and I suspect the Russians are right.

CHAPTER 119

I THOUGHT of leaving Russia at the beginning of autumn but was told by MM. Panin and Alsuviëff that I ought not to go without having spoken to the Empress.

"I should be sorry to do so," I replied, "but, as I can't find anyone to present me to her, I must be resigned."

At last Panin told me to walk in a garden frequented by Her Majesty at an early hour and he said that, meeting me as it were by chance, she would probably speak to me. I told him I should like him to be with her, and he accordingly named a day.

I repaired to the garden and, as I walked about, I marvelled at the statuary it contained, all the statues being made of the worst stone and executed in the worst possible taste. The names cut beneath them gave to the whole the air of a practical joke. A weeping statue was Democritus; another, with grinning mouth, was labelled Heraclitus, an old man with a long beard was Sappho; an old woman, Avicenna; and so on.

As I was smiling at this extraordinary collection, I saw the Czarina approaching, preceded by Count Gregorius Orloff and followed by two ladies. Count Panin was on her left. I stood by the hedge to let her pass but, as soon as she came up to me, she asked smilingly if I had been interested in the statues. I replied, walking behind her, that I presumed they had been placed there to impose on fools or to excite the laughter of those acquainted with history.

"From what I can make out," she replied, "the secret of the matter is that my worthy aunt was imposed on and indeed she did not trouble herself much about such trifles. But I hope you have seen other things in Russia less ridiculous than these statues."

I entertained the sovereign for more than an hour with my remarks on the things of note I had seen in St. Petersburg. The conversation happened to turn on the King of Prussia and I sang his praises but censured his terrible habit of never allowing the person he was questioning time to complete a reply. Catherine smiled and asked me to tell her about the conversation I had had with this monarch and I did so to the best of my ability. She was then kind enough to say that she had never seen me at the *Courtag*, which was a vocal and instrumental concert given at the palace and open to all. I told her I had attended only once, as I was so unfortunate as not to have a taste for music. At this, she turned to Panin and said smilingly that she knew someone else who had the same misfortune. If the reader remembers what I heard her say about music as she was leaving the opera, he will pronounce my speech to have been a very courtier-like one, and

I confess it was; but who can resist making such speeches to a monarch and, above all, a monarch in petticoats?

The Czarina turned from me to talk with M. Bezkoï, who had just come up, and, as M. Panin left the garden, I did so too, delighted with the honour I had had.

The Empress, who was a woman of moderate height and yet of majestic appearance, thoroughly understood the art of making herself loved. She was not beautiful, but yet she was sure of pleasing by her affability and her wit and also by that exquisite tact which made one forget the impressiveness of the sovereign in the gentleness of the woman.

A few days after Count Panin told me the Empress had twice asked after me and that this was a sure sign I had pleased her. He advised me to look out for another opportunity of meeting her and said that in future she would always tell me to approach whenever she saw me, and that, if I wanted some employment, she might possibly do something for me.

Though I did not know what employment I could ask for in that disagreeable country, I was glad to hear that I could have easy access to the Court. With that idea, I walked in the garden every day and here follows my second conversation with the Empress:

She saw me at a distance and sent an officer to fetch me into her presence. As everybody was talking of the tournament, which had had to be postponed on account of the bad weather, she asked me if this kind of entertainment could be given in Venice. I told her some amusing stories on the subject of shows and spectacles and in this connection I remarked that the Venetian climate was more pleasant than the Russian, for in Venice fine days were the rule, while in St. Petersburg they were the exception, though travellers find the year younger there than anywhere else.

"Yes," she said, "in your country it is eleven days older."

"Would it not be worthy of Your Majesty to put Russia on an equality with the rest of the world in this respect by adopting the Gregorian calendar? All the Protestants have done so and England, which adopted it fourteen years ago, has already gained several millions. All Europe is astonished that the old style should be suffered to exist in a country where the sovereign is the head of the Church and whose capital contains an Academy of Science. It is thought that Peter the Great, who made the year begin in January, would have also abolished the old style if he had not been afraid of offending England, which then kept trade and commerce alive throughout your vast empire."

"You know," she replied, with a sly smile, "that Peter the Great was not exactly a learned man."

"He was more than a man of learning; the immortal Peter was a genius of the first order. Instinct supplied the place of knowledge with him; his judgment was always right. His vast genius and his strength of character prevented him from making mistakes and helped him to

destroy all those abuses which threatened to oppose his great designs."

Her Majesty seemed to have heard me with great interest and was about to reply when she noticed two ladies, whom she summoned to her presence. To me she said, "I shall be delighted to reply to you at another time," and then she turned towards the ladies. That "other time" came in eight or ten days, when I was beginning to think she had had enough of me, for she had seen me without summoning me to speak to her.

She began by saying that what I desired should be done was already done. "All the letters sent to foreign countries and all the important State records are marked with both dates."

"But I must point out to Your Majesty that, by the end of the century, the difference will be twelve days, not eleven."

"Not at all; we have seen to that. The last year of this century will not be accounted as a leap year. It is fortunate that the difference is one of eleven days, for, as that is the number which is added every year to the epact, our epacts are almost the same. As to the celebration of Easter, that is a different question. Your equinox is on March the twenty-first, ours on the tenth, and the astronomers say we are both wrong; sometimes it is we who are wrong and sometimes you, as the equinox varies. You know you are not even in agreement with the Jews, whose calculation is said to be perfectly accurate; and, in fine, this difference in the time of celebrating Easter does not disturb in any way public order or the progress of the Government."

"Your Majesty's words fill me with admiration, but the festival of Christmas . . ."

"I suppose you are going to say that we do not celebrate Christmas in the winter solstice, as should properly be done. We know it, but it seems to me a matter of no account. I would rather bear with this small mistake than grievously afflict vast numbers of my subjects by depriving them of birthdays. If I did so, there would be no open complaints uttered, as that is not the fashion in Russia; but they would say in secret that I was an atheist and disputed the infallibility of the Council of Nice. You may think such complaints matter for laughter, but I do not, for I have much more agreeable motives for amusement."

The Czarina was delighted to mark my surprise. I did not doubt for a moment that she had made a special study of the whole subject. M. Alsuvieff told me a few days later, that she had very possibly read a little pamphlet on the subject, the statements of which exactly coincided with her own. He took care to add, however, that it was very possible Her Highness was profoundly learned on the matter, but this was merely a courtier's phrase.

What she said was spoken modestly and energetically and her good humour and pleasant smile remained unmoved throughout. She exercised a constant control over herself and therein appeared the real greatness of her character, for nothing is more difficult. Her demeanour, so different from that of the Prussian King, showed her to be the greater

sovereign of the two; her frank geniality always gave her the advantage, while the short, curt manners of the King often exposed him to being made a dupe. In an examination of the life of Frederick the Great, one cannot help paying a deserved tribute to his courage, but at the same time one feels that, if it had not been for repeated turns of good fortune, he must have succumbed, whereas Catherine was little indebted to the favours of the blind deity. She succeeded in enterprises which, before her time, would have been pronounced impossibilities and it seemed her aim to make people look upon her achievements as of small account.

I read in one of our modern journals (those monuments of editorial self-conceit) that Catherine the Great died happily, as she had lived. Everybody knows that she died suddenly on her close-stool. By calling such a death "happy," the journalist hints that it is the death he himself would desire. Everyone to his taste and we can only hope that the editor may obtain his wish, but who told this silly fellow that Catherine desired such a death? If he regards such a wish as natural to a person of her profound genius, I would ask who told him that men of genius consider a sudden death to be a happy one? Is it because that is his opinion, and are we to conclude that he is therefore a person of genius? To come at the truth, we should have to interrogate the late Empress and ask her some such question as, "Are you well pleased to have died suddenly?"

She would probably reply:

"What a foolish question! Such might be the wish of one driven to despair or someone suffering from a long and grievous malady. Such was not my position, for I enjoyed the blessings of happiness and good health; no worse fate could have happened to me. My sudden death prevented me from concluding several designs which I might have brought to a successful issue if God had granted me the warning of a slight illness. But it was not so; I had to set out on the long journey at a moment's notice, without the time to make any preparations. Is my death any the happier from my not foreseeing it? Do you think me such a coward as to dread the approach of what is common to all? I tell you I should have accounted myself happy if I had had a respite of but a day. Then I should not complain of the Divine justice."

"Does Your Highness accuse God of injustice, then?"

"What boots it, since I am a lost soul? Do you expect the damned to acknowledge the justice of the decree which has consigned them to eternal woe?"

"No doubt it is a difficult matter, but I should have thought that a sense of the justice of your doom would have mitigated the pains of it."

"Perhaps so, but a damned soul must be without consolation forever."

"In spite of that, there are some philosophers who call you happy in your death by virtue of its suddenness."

"Not philosophers, but fools, for in its suddenness was the pain and woe."

"Well said; but may I ask Your Highness if you admit the possibility of a happy eternity after an unhappy death of or an unhappy doom after a happy death?"

"Such suppositions are inconceivable. The happiness of futurity lies in the ecstasy of the soul in feeling freed from the trammels of matter, and unhappiness is in the doom of a soul which was full of remorse at the moment it left the body. But enough, for my punishment forbids my further speech."

"Tell me, at least, what is the nature of your punishment?"

"An everlasting *ennui*. Farewell."

After this long and fanciful digression, the reader will no doubt be obliged by my returning to this world.

Count Panin told me that in a few days the Empress would leave for her country house, and I determined to have an interview with her, foreseeing that it would be the last time.

I had been in the garden a few minutes when heavy rain began to fall and I was going to leave when the Empress summoned me into an apartment on the ground floor of the palace, where she was walking up and down with Gregorovitch and a maid of honour.

"I had forgotten to ask you," she said, graciously, "if you believe the new calculation of the calendar to be exempt from error?"

"No, Your Majesty; but the error is so minute that it will not produce any perceptible effect for nine or ten thousand years."

"I thought so, and in my opinion Pope Gregory should not have acknowledged any mistake at all. The Pope, however, had much less difficulty in carrying out his reform than I should have with my subjects, who are too fond of their ancient usages and customs."

"Nevertheless I am sure Your Majesty would meet with obedience."

"No doubt, but imagine the grief of my clergy in not being able to celebrate the numerous saints' days which would fall on the eleven days to be suppressed. You have only one saint for each day, but we have a dozen at least. I may remark also that all ancient states and kingdoms are attached to their ancient laws. I have heard that your Republic of Venice begins the year in March, and that seems to me as it were a monument and memorial of its antiquity—and indeed the year begins more naturally in March than in January—but does not this usage cause some confusion?"

"None at all, Your Majesty. The letters M V, which we adjoin to all dates in January and February, render all mistakes impossible."

"Venice is also noteworthy for its peculiar system of heraldry, for the amusing form under which it portrays its patron saint and for the five Latin words with which the Evangelist is invoked, in which, as I am told, there is a grammatical blunder which has become respectable by its long standing. But is it true that you do not distinguish between the hours of day and night?"

"It is, Your Majesty, and, what is more, we reckon the day from the beginning of the night."

"Such is the force of custom, which makes us admire what other

nations think ridiculous. You see no inconvenience in your division of the day, which strikes me as most inconvenient."

"You would only have to look at your watch and you would not need to listen for the cannon shot which announces the close of day."

"Yes, but, for this one advantage you have over us, we have two over you. We know that at twelve o'clock it is either midday or midnight."

The Czarina spoke to me about the fondness of the Venetians for games of chance and asked if the Genoa Lottery had been established there.

"I have been asked," she added, "to allow the lottery to be established in my own dominions; but I would never permit it, except on condition that no stake should be below a rouble, and then the poor people would not be able to risk their money in it."

I replied to this discreet observation with a profound bow and thus ended my last interview with the famous Empress, who reigned thirty-five years without committing a single mistake of any importance. The historian will always place her amongst great sovereigns, though the strict moralist will always consider her, and rightly, as one of the most sensual of women.

A few days before I left, I gave an entertainment to my friends at Catherinhoff, winding up with a fine display of fireworks, a present from my friend Melissino. My supper for thirty was exquisite and my ball a brilliant one. In spite of the tenuity of my purse, I felt obliged to give my friends this mark of gratitude for the kindness they had lavished on me.

I left Russia with the actress Valville and I must here tell the reader how I came to make her acquaintance.

I happened to go to the French play and find myself seated next to an extremely pretty lady who was unknown to me. I occasionally addressed an observation to her referring to the play or actors and I was immensely delighted with her spirited answers. Her expression charmed me and I took the liberty of asking her if she were a Russian.

"No, thank God!" she replied, "I am a Parisian and an actress by occupation. My name is Valville; but I don't wonder I am unknown to you, for I have been only a month here and have played but once."

"How is that?"

"Because I was so unfortunate as to fail to win the Czarina's favour. However, as I was engaged for a year, she has kindly ordered that my salary of a hundred roubles be paid monthly. At the end of the year I shall get my passport and go."

"I am sure the Empress thinks she is doing you a favour in paying you for nothing."

"Very likely; but she does not remember that I am forgetting how to act all this time."

"You ought to tell her that."

"I only wish she would give me an audience."

"That is unnecessary. Of course you have a lover."

"No, I haven't."

"That's incredible to me!"

"They say the incredible often happens."

"I am very glad to hear it myself."

I took her address and sent her the following note the next day:

"Madame,—I should like to begin an intrigue with you. You have inspired me with feelings that will make me unhappy unless you reciprocate them. I beg to take the liberty of asking myself to sup with you, but please tell me how much it will cost me. I am obliged to leave for Warsaw in the course of a month and I shall be happy to offer you a place in my travelling-carriage. I shall be able to get you a passport. The bearer of this has orders to wait and I hope your answer will be as plainly worded as my question."

In two hours I received this reply:

"Sir,—As I have the knack of putting an end to an intrigue when it has ceased to amuse me, I have no hesitation in accepting your proposal. As to the sentiments with which you say I have inspired you, I will do my best to share them and to make you happy. Your supper shall be ready and later on we will settle the price of the dessert. I shall be delighted to accept the place in your carriage if you can obtain my expenses to Paris as well as my passport. And, finally, I hope you will find my plain speaking on a par with yours. Goodbye till this evening."

I found my new friend in a comfortable lodging and we accosted each other as if we had been old acquaintances.

"I shall be delighted to travel with you," said she, "but I don't think you will be able to get my passport."

"I have no doubt as to my success," I replied, "if you will present to the Empress the petition I will draft for you."

"I will surely do so," said she, giving me writing materials.

I wrote out the following petition:

"Your Majesty,—I venture to remind Your Highness that my enforced idleness is making me forget my art, which I have not yet learnt thoroughly. Your Majesty's generosity is, therefore, doing me an injury and Your Majesty would do me a great benefit in giving me permission to leave St. Petersburg."

"Nothing more than that?"

"Not a word."

"You say nothing about the passport and nothing about the journey-money. I am not a rich woman."

"Just present this petition and, unless I am very much mistaken, you will have not only your journey-money but also your year's salary."

"Oh, that would be too much!"

"Not at all. You do not know Catherine, but I do. Have this copied and present it in person."

"I will copy it out myself, for I can write a rather good hand. Indeed, it almost seems as if I had composed it; it is exactly my style. I believe you are a better actor than I, and from this evening I shall

call myself your pupil. Come, let us have some supper and you may give me my first lesson."

After a delicate supper, seasoned by pleasant and witty talk, Madame Valville granted me all I could desire. I went downstairs for a moment to send away my coachman and to instruct him what he was to say to Zaire, whom I had forewarned that I was going to Cronstadt and might not return till the next day. My coachman was a Ukrainian on whose fidelity I could rely, but I knew it would be necessary for me to be off with the old love before I was on with the new.

Madame Valville was like most young Frenchwomen of her class; she had charms which she wished to turn to account, and a passable education; her ambition was to be kept by one man, and the title of "mistress" was more pleasing in her ears than that of "wife."

In the intervals of our amorous combats, she told me enough of her life for me to divine what it had been. Clerval, the actor, had been gathering together a company of actors in Paris and, making her acquaintance by chance and finding her to be intelligent, he assured her she was a born actress, though she had never suspected it. The idea had dazzled her and she had signed the agreement. She started from Paris with six other actors and actresses, of whom she was the only one who had never acted.

"I thought," she said, "it was like what is done in Paris, where a girl goes into the chorus or the ballet without having learnt to sing or dance. What else could I think, after an actor like Clerval had assured me I had a talent for acting and had offered me a good engagement? All he required of me was that I should learn by heart and repeat certain passages which I rehearsed in his presence. He said I made a capital soubrette, and he certainly could not have been trying to deceive me, but the fact is, he was deceived himself. A fortnight after my arrival, I made my first appearance and my reception was not a flattering one."

"Perhaps you were nervous?"

"Nervous? Not in the least. Clerval said that, if I could have put on an appearance of nervousness, the Empress, who is kindness itself, would certainly have encouraged me."

I left her the next morning, after I had seen her copy out the petition. She wrote a very good hand.

"I shall present it to-day," said she.

I wished her good luck and arranged to sup with her again on the day I meant to part with Zaire.

All French girls who sacrifice to Venus are of the same sort as La Valville—entirely without passion or love, but pleasant and caressing. They have only one object and that is their own profit. They make and unmake an intrigue with a smiling face and without the slightest difficulty. It is their system and, if it be not absolutely the best, it is certainly the most convenient.

When I got home, I found Zaire submissive but sad, which annoyed

me more than anger would have done, for I loved her. However, it was time to bring the matter to an end and to make up my mind to endure the pain of parting.

Rinaldi, the architect, a man of seventy but vigorous and sensual, was in love with her and had hinted to me several times that he would be only too happy to take her over and pay double the sum I had given for her. My answer had been that I could give her only to a man she liked and that I meant to make her a present of the hundred roubles I had given for her. Rinaldi did not like this answer, as he had not very strong hopes of the girl taking a fancy to him; however, he did not despair.

He happened to call on me the very morning on which I had determined to give her up and, as he spoke Russian perfectly, he gave Zaïre to understand how much he loved her. Her answer was that he must apply to me, as my will was law to her, but that she neither liked nor disliked anyone else. The old man could not obtain any more positive reply and left us with but feeble hopes, but commending himself to my good offices.

When he had gone, I asked Zaire whether she would not like me to leave her to the worthy man, who would treat her as his own daughter.

She was just going to reply when I was handed a note from Madame Valville, asking me to call on her, as she had a piece of news to give me. I ordered the carriage immediately, telling Zaire I should not be long.

"Very good," she replied, "I will give you a plain answer when you come back."

I found Madame Valville in a high state of delight.

"Long live the petition!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw me. "I waited for the Empress to come out of her private chapel. I respectfully presented my petition, which she read as she walked along, and then she told me with a kindly smile to wait a moment. I waited and Her Majesty returned me the petition, initialled in her own hand, and bade me take it to M. Ghelaghin. That gentleman gave me an excellent reception and told me the sovereign had ordered him to give me my passport, my salary for a year and a hundred ducats for the journey. The money will be forwarded in a fortnight, as my name will have to be sent to the *Gazette*."

Madame Valville was very grateful and we fixed the day of our departure. Three or four days later, I sent in my name to the *Gazette*.

I had promised Zaïre to come back, so, telling my new love that I would come and live with her as soon as I had placed the young Russian in good hands, I went home, feeling rather curious to hear Zaïre's determination.

After Zaïre had supped with me in perfect good humour, she asked if M. Rinaldi would pay me back the money I had given for her. I said he would, and she went on, "It seems to me that I am worth more than I was, for I have all your presents and I know Italian."

"You are right, dear, but I don't want it to be said that I made

a profit on you; besides, I intend to make you a present of the hundred roubles."

"As you are going to make me such a handsome present, why not send me back to my father's house? That would be still more generous. If M. Rinaldi really loves me, he can come and talk it over with my father. You have no objection to his paying me whatever sum I choose to name."

"Not at all. On the contrary, I shall be very glad to serve your family, and all the more as Rinaldi is a rich man."

"Very good; you will be always dear to me in my memory. You shall take me to my home to-morrow; and now let us go to bed."

Thus it was that I parted with this charming girl, who made me live soberly all the time I was in St. Petersburg. Zinovieff told me that, if I had liked to deposit a small sum as security, I could have taken her with me; but I had thought the matter over and it seemed to me that, as Zaïre was growing more beautiful and charming, I should end by becoming a perfect slave to her. Possibly, however, I should not have looked into matters so closely if I had not been in love with Madame Valville.

Zaïre spent the next morning gathering together her belongings, now laughing and now weeping, and every time she left her packing to give me a kiss, I could not resist weeping myself. When I restored her to her father, the whole family fell on their knees around me. Alas for poor human nature! Thus it is degraded by the iron heel of oppression. Zaïre looked oddly in the humble cottage, where one large mattress served for the entire family.

Rinaldi took everything in good part. He told me that, since the daughter would make no objection, he had no fear of the father doing so. He went to the house next day, but he did not get the girl till I had left St. Petersburg. He kept her for the remainder of his days and behaved very handsomely to her.

After this melancholy separation, Madame Valville became my sole mistress and we left the Russian capital in the course of a few weeks. I took an Armenian merchant into my service; he had lent me a hundred ducats and cooked rather well in the Oriental style. I had a letter from the Polish President to Prince Augustus Sulkowski and another from the English ambassador to Prince Adam Czartoryski.

The day after we left St. Petersburg, we stopped at Koporie to dine; we had brought with us some choice viands and excellent wines. Two days later we met the famous chapel-master, Galuppi, or Buranelli, who was on his way to St. Petersburg with two friends and an artiste. He did not know me and was astonished to find a Venetian dinner awaiting him at the inn, as also to hear a greeting in his mother tongue. As soon as I had pronounced my name, he embraced me with exclamations of surprise and joy.

The roads were heavy with rain, so we were a week in getting to Riga and, when we arrived, I was sorry to hear that Prince Charles was not there. From Riga we were four days before getting to Königsberg,

where Madame Valville, who was expected in Berlin, had to leave me. I left her my Armenian, to whom she gladly paid the hundred ducats I owed him. I saw her again two years later and will speak of the meeting in due time.

We separated like good friends, without any of the sad reflections which always take away some moments of happiness. We had been lovers only because we had attached no importance to love, and our mutual delights had created between us a friendship that was sincere and capable of devotion. We spent the night at Klein Roop, near Riga, and she offered to give me her diamonds, her jewels and all that she possessed. We were staying with the Countess Loewenwald, to whom I had a letter from the Princess Dolgorouki. This lady had in her house, in the capacity of governess, the pretty English woman whom I had known as Campioni's wife. She told me her husband was in Warsaw and was living with Villiers. She gave me a letter for him and I promised to make him send her some money and I kept my word. Little Betty was as charming as ever, but her mother seemed quite jealous of her and treated her ill.

When I reached Königsberg, I sold my travelling-carriage and took a place in a coach for Warsaw. We were four in all and my companions spoke only German and Polish, so that I had a dreadfully tedious journey. At Warsaw I went to live with Villiers, where I hoped to meet Campioni.

It was not long before I saw him and found him well in health and in comfortable quarters. He kept a dancing-school and had a good many pupils. He was delighted to have news of Fanny and his children. He sent them some money but had no thoughts of having them in Warsaw, as Fanny wished. He assured me she was not his wife.

He told me that Tomatis, the manager of the comic opera, had made a fortune and had in his company a Milanese dancer named Catai, who enchanted all the town by her charms, rather than her talent. Games of chance were permitted, but he warned me that Warsaw was full of card-sharpers. A Veronese woman named Giropoldi, who lived with an officer from Lorraine called Bachelier, held a bank of faro at her house, where a dancer, who had been the mistress of the famous Affisio in Vienna, brought in the customers.

Major Sadir, whom I have mentioned before, kept another gaming-house in company with his mistress, who came from Saxony. The Baron de Sainte-Hélène was also in Warsaw, but his principal occupation was to contract debts which he did not mean to pay. He also lived in Villiers' house with his pretty and virtuous young wife, who would have nothing to say to us. Campioni told me of some other adventurers, whose names I was very glad to know, that I might the better avoid them.

The day after my arrival I hired a man and a carriage, the latter being an absolute necessity in Warsaw, where in my times, at all events, it was impossible to go on foot. I reached the capital of Poland at the end of October, 1765.

My first call was on Prince Adam Czartoryski, Lieutenant of Podolia, for whom I had an introduction. I found him before a table covered with papers and surrounded by forty or fifty persons in an immense library, which he had made into his bedroom. He was married to a very pretty woman, but had not yet had a child by her because she was too thin for his taste.

He read the long letter I gave him and said in elegant French that he had a very high opinion of the writer of the letter, but that, as he was very busy just then, he hoped I would come to supper with him if I had nothing better to do.

I drove off to see Prince Sulkowski, who had just been appointed ambassador to the Court of Louis XV. The prince was the elder of four brothers and a man of great understanding, but a theorist in the style of the Abbé Saint-Pierre. He read the letter and said he wanted to have a long talk with me but that, being forced to go out, he would be obliged if I would come and dine with him at four o'clock. I accepted the invitation.

I then went to a merchant named Schempinski, who was to pay me fifty ducats a month on Papanelopulo's order. My man told me there was a public rehearsal of a new opera at the theatre, and I accordingly spent three hours there, knowing none and unknown to all. All the actresses were pretty, but especially La Catai, who did not know the first elements of dancing. She was greatly applauded, above all by Prince Repnin, the Russian ambassador, who seemed a person of the greatest consequence.

Prince Sulkowski kept me at table for four mortal hours, talking on every subject except those with which I happened to be acquainted. His strong points were politics and commerce and, as he found my mind a mere void on these subjects, he shone all the more and took quite a fancy to me—as I believe, because he found me such a capital listener.

About nine o'clock, "having nothing better to do" (a favourite phrase with the Polish noblemen), I went to Prince Adam, who, after pronouncing my name, introduced me to the company. There were present Monseigneur Krasinski, the Prince-Bishop of Warmia, the chief Prothonotary Rzewuski, whom I had known in St. Petersburg, the Palatin Oginski, General Roniker and two others, whose barbarous names I have forgotten. The last person to whom he introduced me was his wife, with whom I was very pleased. A few moments after a fine-looking gentleman came into the room and everybody stood up. Prince Adam pronounced my name and, turning to me, said coolly, "This is the King."

This method of introducing a stranger to a sovereign prince was assuredly not an overwhelming one, but it was nevertheless a surprise; and I found that an excess of simplicity may be as confusing as the other extreme. At first I thought the prince might be making a fool of me, but I quickly put aside the idea and stepped forward and was about to kneel, but His Majesty gave me his hand to kiss with exquisite

grace and, as he was about to address me, Prince Adam showed him the letter of the English ambassador, who was well known to the King. The King read it, still standing, and began to ask me questions about the Czarina and the Court, appearing to take great interest in my replies.

When supper was announced, the King continued to talk and led me into the supper-room, and made me sit down at his right. Everybody ate heartily except the King, who appeared to have no appetite, and myself, who would never have ventured to have an appetite, even if I had not dined well with Prince Sulkowski, for I saw the whole table hushed to listen to my replies to the King's question.

After supper the King began to comment very graciously on my answers. His Majesty spoke simply, but with great elegance. As he was leaving, he told me he should always be delighted to see me at his Court, and Prince Adam said that, if I liked to be introduced to his father, I had only to call at eleven o'clock the next morning.

The King of Poland was of medium height but well built. His face was not a handsome one, but it was kindly and intelligent. He was rather shortsighted and his features in repose bore a somewhat melancholy expression, but in speaking the whole face seemed to light up. All he said was seasoned by a pleasant wit.

I was rather well pleased with this interview and returned to my inn, where I found Campioni seated amongst several guests of either sex and, after staying with them for half an hour, I went to bed.

At eleven o'clock the next day I was presented to the great Russian paladin. He was in his dressing-gown, surrounded by his gentlemen in the national costume. He was standing up and conversing with his followers in a kindly but grave manner. As soon as his son Adam mentioned my name, he unbent and gave me a most kindly yet dignified welcome. His manner was not austere nor did it inspire one with familiarity, and I thought him likely to be a good judge of character. When I told him I had gone to Russia only to amuse myself and see good company, he immediately concluded that my aims in coming to Poland were of the same kind, and he told me that he could introduce me to a large circle. He added that he should be glad to see me at dinner and supper whenever I had no other engagements.

He went behind a screen to complete his toilette and soon appeared in the uniform of his regiment, with a fair peruke in the style of the late King Augustus II. He made a collective bow to everyone and went to see his wife, who was recovering from a disease which would have proved fatal if it had not been for the skill of Reimann, a pupil of the great Boerhaave. The lady came of the now extinct family of Enoff, whose immense wealth she brought to her husband. When he married her, he abandoned the Maltese Order, of which he had been a knight. He won his bride by a duel with pistols on horseback. The lady had promised that her hand should be the conqueror's guerdon, and the prince was so fortunate as to kill his rival. Of this marriage there issued Prince Adam and a daughter, now a widow and known

under the name of Lubomirska but formerly under that of Strasnikowa, that being the title of the office her husband held in the royal army.

It was this prince palatine and his brother, the High Chancellor of Lithuania, who first brought about the Polish troubles. The two brothers were discontented with their position at the Court, where Count Brühl was supreme, and put themselves at the head of the plot for dethroning the King and placing on the throne, under Russian protection, their young nephew, who had originally gone to St. Petersburg as an attaché at the embassy and afterwards succeeded in winning the favour of Catherine, then Grand Duchess but soon to become Empress.

This young man was Stanislas Poniatowski, son of Constance Czarotorski and the celebrated Poniatowski, the friend of Charles XII. As luck would have it, a revolution was unnecessary to place him on the throne, for the King died in 1763 and gave place to Prince Poniatowski, who was chosen King on the sixth of September, 1764, under the title of Stanislas Augustus I. He had reigned two years at the time of my visit and I found Warsaw in a state of gaiety, for a Diet was to be held and everyone wished to know how it was that Catherine had given the Poles a native king.

At dinner-time I went to the paladin's and found three tables, at each of which there were places for thirty, and this was the usual number entertained by the prince. The luxury of the Court paled before that of the paladin's house. Prince Adam said to me, "Chevalier, your place will always be at my father's table."

This was a great honour and I felt it. The prince introduced me to his handsome sister and to several paladins and *starosts*. I did not fail to call on all these great personages, so in the course of a fortnight I found myself a welcome guest in all the best houses.

My purse was too lean to allow of my gambling or consoling myself with a theatrical beauty, so I fell back on the library of Monseigneur Zalewski, the Bishop of Kiowia, to whom I had taken a great liking. I spent almost all my mornings with him and it was from this prelate that I learnt all the intrigues and complots by which the ancient Polish Constitution, of which the bishop was a great admirer, had been overturned. Unhappily, his firmness was of no avail and a few months after I left Warsaw the Russian tyrants arrested him and he was exiled to Siberia.

I lived calmly and peaceably and still look back on those days with pleasure. I spent my afternoons with the paladin playing *tre sette*—an Italian game of which he was very fond and which I played well enough for the paladin to like to have me as a partner.

In spite of my sobriety and economy, I found myself in debt three months after my arrival and I did not know where to turn for help. The fifty ducats per month which were sent to me from Venice were insufficient, for the money I had to spend on my carriage, my lodging, my servant and my dress brought me down to the lowest ebb and I

did not care to appeal to anyone. But Fortune had a surprise in store for me and hitherto she had never left me.

Madame Schmitt, whom the King for good reasons of his own had accommodated with apartments in the palace, asked me one evening to sup with her, telling me that the King would be of the party. I accepted the invitation and was happy to find there the delightful Bishop Krasinski, the Abbé Guigiotti and two or three other amateurs of Italian literature. The King, whose knowledge of literature was extensive, began to tell anecdotes of classical writers, quoting manuscript authorities which reduced me to silence and which were possibly invented by him. Everyone talked except myself and, as I had had no dinner, I ate like an ogre, replying only with monosyllables when politeness obliged me to say something. The conversation turned on Horace and everyone gave his opinion on the great materialist's philosophy, and the Abbé Guigiotti obliged me speak by saying that, unless I agreed with him, I should not keep silence.

"If you take my silence for consent to your extravagant eulogium of Horace," I said, "you are mistaken, for in my opinion the *nec cum venari volet poemata panges*, of which you think so much, is a satire devoid of delicacy."

"Satire and delicacy are hard to combine."

"Not for Horace, who succeeded in pleasing the great Augustus and rendering him immortal as the protector of learned men. Indeed, other sovereigns seem to vie with him by taking his name and even disguising it."

The King (who had taken the name of Augustus himself) looked grave and said, "What sovereigns have adopted a disguised form of the name Augustus?"

"The first king of Sweden, who called himself Gustavus, which is only an anagram of Augustus."

"That is a very amusing idea and worth more than all the tales we have told. Where did you find that?"

"In a manuscript at Wolfenbittel."

The King laughed loudly, though he himself had been citing manuscripts. But he returned to the charge and said, "Can you cite any passage of Horace (not in manuscript) where he shows his talent for delicacy and satire?"

"Sir, I could quote several passages, but here is one which seems to me very good: *Coram rege sua de paupertate tacentes, plus quam poscentes ferent*."

"True indeed," said the King, with a smile.

Madame Schmitt, who did not know Latin and inherited curiosity from her mother and ultimately from Eve, asked the bishop what it meant, and he translated it, "They that speak not of their necessities in the presence of a king gain more than they that are ever asking."

The lady remarked that she saw nothing satirical in this.

After this it was my turn to be silent again, but the King began to

talk about Ariosto and expressed a desire to read him with me. I replied with a bow and Horace's words: *Tempora quæram*.

Next morning, as I was coming out from mass, the generous and unfortunate Stanislas Augustus gave me his hand to kiss and at the same time slid a roll of money into my hand, saying, "Thank no one but Horace and don't tell anyone about it."

The roll contained two hundred ducats and I immediately paid off my debts. Thereafter I went almost every morning to the King's study, where he was always glad to see his courtiers, but there was no more said about reading Ariosto. He knew Italian, but not enough to speak it and, still less, to appreciate the beauties of the great poet. When I think of this worthy prince and of the great qualities he possessed as a man, I cannot understand how he came to commit so many errors as a king. Perhaps the least of them all was that he allowed himself to survive his country. As he could not find a friend to kill him, I think he should have killed himself. But indeed he had no need to ask a friend to do him this service; he should have imitated the great Kosciuszko and entered into life eternal by the sword of a Russian.

The carnival was a brilliant one. All Europe seemed to have assembled in Warsaw to see the happy being whom Fortune had so unexpectedly raised to a throne but, after seeing him, all were agreed that, in his case at all events, the deity had been neither blind nor foolish. Perhaps, however, he liked showing himself rather too much. I have detected him in some distress on being informed that there was such a thing as a stranger in Warsaw who had not seen him. No one had any need of an introduction, for his Court was, as all Courts should be, open to everyone and, when he noticed a strange face, he was the first to speak.

Here I must set down an event which took place towards the end of January. It was, in fact, a dream and, as I think I have confessed before, superstition had always some hold on me. I dreamt I was at a banquet and one of the guests threw a bottle at my face; the blood poured forth; I ran my sword through my enemy's body and jumped into a carriage and rode away.

Prince Charles of Courland came to Warsaw and asked me to dine with him at the house of Prince Poninski, the same that became so notorious and was afterwards proscribed and shamefully dishonoured. His was a hospitable house and he was surrounded by his agreeable family. I had never called on him, as he was not *persona grata* to the King or his relatives.

In the course of the dinner a bottle of champagne burst, and a piece of broken glass struck me just below the eye. It cut a vein and the blood gushed over my face, over my clothes and even over the cloth. Everybody rose, my wound was bound up, the cloth was changed and the dinner went on merrily. I was surprised at the likeness between my dream and this incident, while I congratulated myself on the

happy difference between them. However, it all came true after a few months.

Madame Binetti, whom I had last seen in London, arrived in Warsaw with her husband and Pic, the dancer. She had a letter of introduction to the King's brother, who was a general in the Austrian service and then resided in Warsaw. I learned all this the day they came, when I was at supper at the paladin's. The King was present and said he should like to keep them in Warsaw for a week and see them dance if a thousand ducats would satisfy them.

I went to see Madame Binetti and give her the good news the next morning. She was very much surprised to meet me in Warsaw and still more so at the news I gave her. She called Pic, who seemed undecided, but, as we were talking it over, Prince Poniatowski came in to acquaint them with His Majesty's wishes and the offer was accepted. In three days Pic arranged a ballet; the costumes, the scenery, the music, the dancers, all were ready, and Tomatis put it on handsomely, to please his generous master. The couple gave such satisfaction that they were engaged for a year. La Catai was furious, as Madame Binetti threw her completely into the shade and, worse still, drew away her lovers. Tomatis, who was under La Catai's influence, made things so unpleasant for Madame Binetti that the two dancers became deadly enemies.

In ten or twelve days Madame Binetti was settled in a well furnished house; her plate was simple but good, her cellar full of excellent wine, her cook an artist and her adorers numerous, amongst them being Moszcuski and Branicki, the King's friend.

The pit was divided into two parties, for La Catai was resolved to make a stand against the newcomer, though her own talents were not to be compared to Madame Binetti's. She danced in the first ballet and her rival in the second. Those who applauded the first greeted the second in dead silence and *vice versâ*. I had great obligations towards Madame Binetti, but my duty also drew me towards La Catai, who numbered in her party all the Czartoryskis and their following, Prince Lubomirski and other powerful nobles. It was plain that I could not desert to Madame Binetti without earning the contempt of the other party.

Madame Binetti reproached me bitterly and I laid the case plainly before her. She agreed that I could not do otherwise, but begged me to stay away from the theatre thereafter, telling me that she had a rod in pickle for Tomatis which would make him repent of his impertinence. She called me her oldest friend and indeed I was very fond of her and cared nothing for La Catai despite her prettiness.

Xavier Branicki, the royal *postoli*, Knight of the White Eagle, Colonel of Uhlans, the King's friend, was Madame Binetti's chief adorer. The lady probably confided her displeasure to him and begged him to take vengeance on the manager, who had committed so many offences against her. Count Branicki, in his turn probably promised to avenge her quarrel and, if no opportunity of doing so arose, to

create one. At least, this is the way in which affairs of this kind are usually managed and I can find no better explanation for what happened. Nevertheless, the way in which the Pole took vengeance was very original and extraordinary.

On the twentieth of February Branicki went to the opera and, contrary to his custom, went to La Catai's dressing-room and began to pay his court to the actress, Tomatis being present. Both he and the actress concluded that Branicki had had a quarrel with her rival and, though she did not much care to place him in the number of her adorers, La Catai yet gave him a good reception, for she knew it would be dangerous to scorn his suit openly.

When La Catai had completed her toilette, the gallant *postoli* offered her his arm to take her to her carriage, which was at the door. Tomatis followed and I, too, was there, awaiting my carriage. Madame Catai came down, the carriage door was opened, she stepped in and Branicki got in after her, telling the astonished Tomatis to follow them in the other carriage. Tomatis replied that he meant to ride in his own carriage and begged the colonel to get out. Branicki paid no attention and told the coachman to drive on. Tomatis forbade him to stir and the man, of course, obeyed his master. The gallant *postoli* was therefore obliged to get down, but he bade his hussar give Tomatis a box on the ear and this order was so promptly and vigorously obeyed that the unfortunate man was on the ground before he had time to recollect that he had a sword. He got up eventually and drove off, but he would eat no supper, no doubt because he had a blow to digest. I was to have supped with him, but after this scene I had really not the face to go. I went home in a melancholy and reflective mood, wondering whether the whole affair had been concerted; but I concluded that this was impossible, as neither Branicki nor Binetti could have foreseen the impoliteness and cowardice of Tomatis.

In the next chapter the reader will see how tragically the matter ended.

CHAPTER 120

ON reflection, I concluded that Branicki had not done an ungentlemanly thing in getting into Tomatis's carriage; he had merely behaved with impetuosity, as if he had been La Catai's lover. It also appeared to me that, considering the affront he had received from the jealous Italian, the box on the ear was a very moderate form of vengeance. A blow is bad, of course, but not so bad as death; and Branicki might very well have run his sword through the manager's body. Certainly, if Branicki had killed him, he would have been stigmatised as an assassin, for, though Tomatis had a sword, the Polish officer's servants would never have allowed him to draw it. Nevertheless, I could not help thinking that Tomatis should have tried to take the servant's life, even at the risk of his own. He required no more courage for that than in ordering the King's favourite to come out of the carriage. He might

have foreseen that the Polish noble would be stung to the quick and would surely attempt to take speedy vengeance.

The next day the encounter was the subject of all conversations. Tomatis remained indoors for a week, calling for vengeance in vain. The King told him he could do nothing for him, as Branicki maintained he had given only insult for insult. I saw Tomatis, who told me in confidence that he could easily take vengeance but it would cost him too dear. He had spent forty thousand ducats on the two ballets and, if he had avenged himself, he would have lost nearly all of it, as he would be obliged to leave the kingdom. The only consolation he had was that his great friends were kinder to him than ever and the King himself honoured him with peculiar attention. Madame Binetti was triumphant. When I saw her, she consoled with me ironically on the mishap that had befallen my friend. She wearied me, but I could not guess that Branicki had acted only at her instigation and still less that she had a grudge against me. Indeed, if I had known it, I should only have laughed at her, for I had nothing to dread from her *bravo's* dagger. I had never seen him nor spoken to him; he could have no opportunity for attacking me. He was never with the King in the morning and never went to the paladin's to supper, being an unpopular character with the Polish nobility. This Branicki was said to have been originally a Cossack, Branecki by name. He became the King's favourite and assumed the name of Branicki, pretending to be of the same family as the illustrious marshal of that name, who was still alive but who, far from recognising the pretender, ordered his shield to be broken and buried with him as the last of his race. However that may be, Branicki was the tool of the Russian party, the determined enemy of those who withstood Catherine's design of Russianising the ancient Polish Constitution. The King liked him out of habit and because he had particular obligations to him.

The life I lived was really exemplary. I indulged in neither love affairs nor gaming. I worked for the King, hoping to become his secretary. I paid my court to the princess-palatine, who liked my company, and I played *tre sette* with the paladin himself.

On the fourth of March, St. Casimir's Eve, there was a banquet to which I had the honour to be invited. Casimir was the name of the King's eldest brother, who held the office of Grand Chamberlain. After dinner the King asked me if I intended going to the theatre, where a Polish play was to be given for the first time. Everybody was interested in this novelty, but it was a matter of indifference to me, as I did not understand the language, and I told the King as much.

"Never mind," said he, "come in my box."

This was too flattering an invitation to be refused, so I obeyed the royal command and stood behind the King's chair. After the second act a ballet was given and the dancing of Madame Caracci, a Piedmontese, so pleased His Majesty that he went to the unusual pains of clapping her.

I knew the dancer only by sight, for I had never spoken to her. She

had some talents. Her principal admirer was Count Poninski, who was always reproaching me, when I dined with him, for visiting the other dancers to the exclusion of Madame Caracci. I thought of his reproach at the time and determined to pay her a visit after the ballet to congratulate her on her performance and the King's applause. On my way I passed by Madame Binetti's dressing-room and, seeing the door open, I stayed a moment. Count Branicki came up and I left with a bow and passed on to Madame Caracci's dressing-room. She was astonished to see me and began with kindly reproaches for my neglect, to which I replied with compliments and then, giving her a kiss, I promised to come to see her.

Just as I embraced her, who should enter but Branicki, whom I had left a moment before with Madame Binetti! He had clearly followed me in the hope of picking a quarrel. He was accompanied by Bininski, his lieutenant-colonel. As soon as he appeared, politeness made me stand up and turn to go, but he stopped me.

"It seems I have come at a bad time; it looks as if you loved this lady."

"Certainly, my lord; does not your excellency consider her worthy of love?"

"Quite so; but, as it happens, I love her, too, and I am not the man to bear any rivals."

"Now that I know that, I shall love her no more."

"Then you give her up?"

"With all my heart, for everyone must yield to such a noble as you are."

"Very good; but I call a man who yields a coward."

"Isn't that a rather strong expression?"

As I uttered these words, I looked proudly at him and touched the hilt of my sword. Three or four officers were present and witnessed what passed.

I had hardly gone four paces from the dressing-room when I heard myself called "Venetian coward." In spite of my rage, I restrained myself and turned back, saying coolly and firmly that perhaps a Venetian coward might kill a brave Pole outside the theatre and, without awaiting a reply, I left the building by the chief staircase.

I waited vainly outside the theatre a quarter of an hour with my sword in my hand, for I was not afraid of losing forty thousand ducats like Tomatis. At last, half perishing with cold, I called my carriage and drove to the paladin's, where the King was to sup.

The cold and loneliness began to cool my brain and I congratulated myself on my self-restraint in not drawing my sword in the actress's dressing-room and felt glad that Branicki had not followed me down the stairs, for his friend Bininski had a sabre and I should probably have been assassinated.

Although the Poles are polite enough, there is still a good deal of the old leaven in them. They are still Dacians and Sarmatians at dinner, in war and in the fury of what they call "friendship," but which

is often only a frightful tyranny. They can never understand that a man may be sufficient company for himself and that it is not right to descend on him in a troop and ask him to invite them to stay to dinner.

I made up my mind that Madame Binetti had incited Branicki to follow me and possibly to treat me as he had treated Tomatis. I had not received a blow, certainly, but I had been called a coward. I had no choice but to demand satisfaction, but I also determined to be studiously moderate throughout. In this frame of mind, I got out at the paladin's, resolved to tell the whole story to the King, leaving to His Majesty the task of compelling his favourite to give me satisfaction.

As soon as the paladin saw me, he reproached me in a friendly manner for keeping him waiting and we sat down to *tre sette*. I was his partner and committed several blunders. When it came to losing a second game, he said, "Where is your head to-night?"

"My lord, it is four leagues away."

"A respectable man ought to have his head in the game and not at a distance of four leagues."

With these words, the prince threw down his cards and began to walk up and down the room. I was rather startled but got up and stood by the fire, waiting for the King. But after I had waited thus for half a hour, a chamberlain came from the palace and announced that His Majesty could not do himself the honour of supping with the paladin that night.

This was a blow for me, but I concealed my disappointment. Supper was served and I sat down as usual at the left of the paladin, who was annoyed with me and showed it. We were eighteen at table and for once I had no appetite. About the middle of the supper Prince Gaspard Lubomirski came in and chanced to sit down opposite me. As soon as he saw me, he condoled with me in a loud voice for what had happened.

"I am sorry for you," said he, "but Branicki was drunk and you really shouldn't count what he said as an insult."

"What has happened?" became at once the general question. I held my tongue and, when they asked Lubomirski, he replied that, as I kept silence, it was his duty to do the same.

Thereupon the paladin, speaking in his friendliest manner, said to me, "What took place between you and Branicki?"

"I will tell you the whole story, my lord, in private after supper"

The conversation became commonplace and, after the meal was over, the paladin took up his stand by the small door by which he was accustomed to leave the room, and there I told him the whole story. He sighed, condoled with me and added, "You had good reason for being absent-minded at cards."

"May I presume to ask your excellency's advice?"

"I never give advice in these affairs, in which you must do everything or nothing."

The paladin shook me by the hand and I went home and slept for six hours. As soon as I awoke, I sat up in bed and my first thought was "everything or nothing." I soon rejected the latter alternative and saw I must demand a duel to the death. If Branicki refused to fight, I should be compelled to kill him, even if I were to lose my head for it.

This was my determination to write to him, proposing a duel four leagues from Warsaw, this being the limit of the *starostia* in which duelling was forbidden on pain of death. I wrote as follows, for I have kept the rough draft of the letter to this day:

"Warsaw, March 5th, 1766. 5 A. M.

"My Lord,—Yesterday evening your excellency insulted me with a light heart without my having given you any cause or reason for doing so. This seems to indicate that you hate me and would gladly efface me from the land of the living. I both can and will oblige you in this matter. Be kind enough, therefore, to drive me in your carriage to a place where my death will not subject your lordship to the vengeance of the law in case you obtain the victory, and where I shall enjoy the same advantage if God give me grace to kill your lordship. I would not make this proposal did I not believe your lordship to be of a noble disposition.

I have the honour to be, etc."

I sent this letter an hour before daybreak to Branicki's lodging in the palace. My messenger had orders to give the letter into the count's own hands, to wait for him to rise, also to await an answer.

In half an hour I received the following reply:

"Sir,—I accept your proposal and shall be glad if you will have the kindness to inform me when I shall have the honour of seeing you.

I remain, sir, etc."

I answered this immediately, informing him I would call on him the next day at six o'clock in the morning.

Shortly after I received a second letter, in which he said that I might choose the arms and place, but that our differences must be settled in the course of that day.

I sent him the measure of my sword, which was thirty-two inches long, telling him he might choose any place beyond the ban. In reply, I had the following:

"Sir,—You will oblige me by coming now. I have sent my carriage.

I have the honour to be, etc."

I replied that I had business all the day and that, as I had made up my mind not to call upon him except for the purpose of fighting, I begged him not to be offended if I took the liberty of sending back his carriage.

An hour later Branicki called in person, leaving his suite at the door. He came into the room, requested some gentlemen who were talking with me to leave us alone, locked the door after him and then sat down on my bed. I did not understand what all this meant, so I took up my pistols.

"Don't be afraid," said he. "I am not come to assassinate you but merely to say that I accept your proposal, on condition only that the duel shall take place to-day. If not, never."

"It is out of the question. I have letters to write and some business to do for the King."

"That will do afterwards. In all probability you will not fall and, if you do, I am sure the King will forgive you. Besides, a dead man need fear no reproaches."

"I want to make my will."

"Come, come, you needn't be afraid of dying; it will be time enough for you to make your will in fifty years."

"But why should your excellency not wait till to-morrow?"

"I don't want to be caught."

"You will have nothing to fear from me."

"I daresay but, unless we make haste, the King will have us both arrested."

"How can he, unless you have told him about our quarrel?"

"Ah, you don't understand! Well, I am quite willing to give you satisfaction, but it must be to-day or never."

"Very good. This duel is too dear to my heart for me to leave you any pretext for avoiding it. Call for me after dinner for I shall need all my strength."

"Certainly. For my part I like a good supper after, better than a good dinner before."

"Everyone to his taste."

"True. By the way, why did you send me the length of your sword? I intend to fight with pistols, for I never use swords with unknown persons."

"What do you mean? I beg of you to refrain from insulting me in my own house. I do not intend to fight with pistols and you cannot compel me to do so, for I have your letter giving me the choice of weapons."

"Strictly speaking, no doubt you are in the right, but I am sure you are too polite not to give way when I assure you that you will lay me under a great obligation by doing so. Very often the first shot is a miss and, if that is the case with both of us, I promise to fight with swords as long as you like. Will you oblige me in the matter?"

"Yes, for I like your way of asking, though, in my opinion, a pistol duel is a barbarous affair. I accept, but on the following conditions: you must bring two pistols, charge them in my presence and give me the choice. If the first shot is a miss, we will fight with swords till the first blood or to the death, whichever you prefer. Call for me at three o'clock and choose some place where we shall be secure from the law."

"Very good. You are a good-natured fellow, allow me to embrace you. Give me your word of honour not to say a word about it to anyone for, if you did, we should be arrested immediately."

"You need not be afraid of my talking; the project is too dear to me."

"Good. Farewell till three o'clock."

As soon as the brave braggart had left me, I set aside the papers I was working on for the King and went to Campioni, in whom I had great confidence.

"Take this packet to the King," I said, "if I happen to be killed. You may guess, perhaps, what is going to happen, but do not say a word to anyone, as it would mean loss of honour to me."

"I understand. You may reckon on my discretion and I hope the affair may be ended honourably and happily for you. But take a piece of friendly advice—don't spare your opponent, were it the King himself, for it might cost you your life. I know that by experience."

"I will not forget. Farewell."

We kissed each other and I ordered an excellent dinner, for I had no mind to be sent to Pluto on an empty stomach. Campioni came in to dinner at one o'clock and at dessert I had a visit from two young counts with their tutor, Bertrand, a kindly Swiss. They were witnesses to my cheerfulness and the excellent appetite with which I ate. At half-past two I dismissed my company and stood at the window to be ready to go down directly Branicki's carriage appeared. He drove up in a travelling-carriage and six; two grooms, leading saddle-horses, went in front, followed by his two aides-de-camp and two hussars. Behind his carriage stood four servants. I hastened to descend and found my enemy was accompanied by a lieutenant-general and an armed footman. The door was opened, the general gave me his place and I ordered my servants not to follow me, but to await my orders at the house.

"You might need them," said Branicki. "They had better come along."

"If I had as many as you, I would certainly agree to your proposition; but, as it is, I shall do still better without any at all. If need be, your excellency will see that I am tended by your own servants."

He gave me his hand and assured me they should wait on me before himself.

I sat down and we went off.

It would have been absurd if I had asked where we were going, so I held my tongue, for at such moments a man should take heed to his words. Branicki was silent and I thought the best thing I could do would be to engage him in a trivial conversation.

"Does your excellency intend spending the spring in Warsaw?"

"I had thought of doing so, but you may possibly send me to pass the spring somewhere else."

"Oh, I hope not!"

"Have you seen any military service?"

"Yes; but may I ask why your excellency asks me the question, for . . . ?"

"I had no particular reason; it was only for the sake of saying something."

We had driven about half an hour, when the carriage stopped at



As soon as we had taken up our positions, I begged him to fire first. Instead of doing so immediately, he lost two or three seconds in sighting, aiming and covering his head by raising the weapon before it. I was not in a position to let him kill me at his ease, so I suddenly aimed and fired at him, just as he fired on me.

the door of a large garden. We got down and, following the *postoli*, reached a green arbour (which, by the way, was not at all green on that fifth of March). In it was a stone table, on which the footman placed two pistols a foot and a half long, with a powder flask and scales. He weighed the powder, loaded them equally and laid them down crosswise on the table.

This done, Branicki said boldly, "Choose your weapon, sir."

At this the general called out, "Is this a duel, sir?"

"Yes"

"You cannot fight here; you are within the ban."

"No matter."

"It does matter and I, at all events, refuse to be a witness. I am on guard at the castle and you have taken me by surprise."

"Be quiet; I will answer for everything. I owe this gentleman satisfaction and I mean to give it him here."

"M. Casanova," said the general, "you cannot fight here."

"Then why have I been brought here? I shall defend myself wherever I am attacked."

"Lay the whole matter before the King and you shall have my voice in your favour."

"I am quite willing to do so, general, if his excellency will say that he regrets what passed between us last night"

Branicki looked fiercely at me and said wrathfully that he had come to fight and not to parley.

"General," said I, "you can bear witness that I have done all in my power to avoid this duel."

The general went away with his head between his hands and, throwing off my cloak, I took the first pistol that came to my hand. Branicki took the other and said he would guarantee upon his honour that my weapon was a good one.

"I am going to try its goodness on your head," I answered.

He turned pale at this, threw his sword to one of his servants and bared his throat, and I was obliged, to my sorrow, to follow his example, for my sword was the only weapon I had, with the exception of the pistol. I bared my chest also and stepped back five or six paces and he did the same.

As soon as we had taken up our positions, I took off my hat with my left hand and begged him to fire first.

Instead of doing so immediately, he lost two or three seconds sighting, aiming and covering his head by raising the weapon before it. I was not in a position to humour all his caprices, so I suddenly aimed and fired at him, just as he fired at me. That I did so is evident, as all the witnesses were unanimous in saying that they heard only one report. I felt I was wounded in my left hand and so I put it into my pocket and ran towards my enemy, who had fallen. All of a sudden, as I knelt beside him, three bare swords were flourished over my head and three noble assassins prepared to cut me down beside their master. Fortunately Branicki had not lost consciousness of the power of

speech and he cried out in a voice of thunder, "Scoundrels! Have some respect for a man of honour."

This seemed to petrify them. I put my right hand under the *postoli's* armpit, while the general helped him on the other side, and thus we took him to the inn, which happened to be near at hand.

Branicki stooped as he walked, and gazed at me curiously, apparently wondering where all the blood on my clothes came from.

When we got to the inn, Branicki lay down in an armchair. We unbuttoned his clothes and lifted up his shirt and he could see for himself that he was dangerously wounded. My ball had entered his body by the seventh rib on the right and had gone out by the second rib on the left. The two wounds were ten inches apart and the case was of an alarming nature, as the intestines must have been pierced. Branicki spoke to me in a weak voice:

"You have killed me, so make haste away, as you are in danger of the gibbet. The duel was fought within the ban and I am a high court officer and a Knight of the White Eagle. So lose no time and, if you have not enough money, take my purse."

I picked up the purse which had fallen out, and put it back in his pocket, thanking him and saying it would be useless to me, for, if I were guilty, I was content to lose my head. "I hope," I added, "that your wound will not be mortal, and I am deeply grieved at your obliging me to fight."

With these words I kissed him on his brow and left the inn, seeing neither horses nor carriage nor servant. They had all gone off for a doctor, a surgeon, a priest and the friends and relatives of the wounded man.

I was alone and without any weapon, in the midst of a snow-covered country, my hand was wounded and I had not the slightest idea which was the way to Warsaw.

I took the road which seemed most likely and, after I had gone some distance, I met a peasant with an empty sleigh.

"Warszawa?" I cried, showing him a ducat.

He understood me and lifted a coarse mat, with which he covered me when I got into the sleigh, and then set off at a gallop.

All at once Bininski, Branicki's bosom friend, came galloping furiously along the road with his bare sword in his hand. He was evidently running after me. Happily, he did not glance at the wretched sleigh in which I was or else he would undoubtedly have murdered me. I got at last to Warsaw and went to the house of Prince Adam Czartoryski, to beg him to shelter me, but there was nobody there. Without delay I determined to seek refuge in the Convent of the Récollets, which was handy.

I rang at the door of the monastery and the porter, seeing me covered with blood, hastened to shut the door, guessing the object of my visit. But I did not give him the time to do so but, honouring him with a hearty kick, forced my way in. His cries attracted a troop of frightened monks. I demanded sanctuary and threatened them with vengeance if

they refused to grant it. One of their number spoke to me and I was taken to a little den, which looked more like a dungeon than anything else. I offered no resistance, feeling sure they would change their tune before very long. I asked them to send for my servants and, when they came, I sent for a doctor and Campioni. Before the surgeon could come, the Paladin of Podlachia was announced. I had never had the honour of speaking to him but, after hearing the story of my duel, he was so kind as to give me all the particulars of a duel he had fought in his youthful days. Soon after came the Paladin of Kalisch, Prince Jablenowski, Prince Sanguska and the Paladin of Vilna, who all joined in a chorus of abuse of the monks who had lodged me so scurvily. The poor monks excused themselves by saying that I had ill-treated their porter, which made my noble friends laugh; but I did not laugh, for my wound was very painful. However, I was immediately moved into two of their best guest-rooms.

The ball had pierced my hand by the metacarpus under the index finger and had broken the first phalanges. Its force had been arrested by a metal button on my waistcoat and it had inflicted only a slight wound on my stomach, close to the navel. However, there it was and it had to be extracted, for it pained me extremely. An empiric named Gendron, the first surgeon my servants had found, made an opening on the opposite side of my hand, which doubled the wound. While he was performing this painful operation, I told the story of the duel to the company, concealing the anguish I was enduring. What a power vanity exercises on the moral and physical forces! If I had been alone, I should probably have fainted.

As soon as the empiric Gendron was gone, the paladin's surgeon came in and took charge of the case, calling Gendron a low fellow. At the same time, Prince Lubomirski, the husband of the paladin's daughter, arrived and gave us all a surprise by recounting the strange occurrences which had happened after the duel. Bininski came to where Branicki was lying and, seeing his wound, rode off furiously on horseback, swearing to strike me dead wherever he found me. He fancied I would be with Tomatis, and went to his house. He found Tomatis with his mistress, Prince Lubomirski and Count Moszczinski, but no Casanova was visible. He asked where I was and, on Tomatis replying that he did not know, he discharged a pistol at this head. At this dastardly action, Count Moszczinski seized him and tried to throw him out of the window, but the madman got loose of him with three cuts of his sabre, one of which slashed the count on the face and knocked out three of his teeth.

"After this exploit," Prince Lubomirski continued, "he seized me by the throat and held a pistol to my head, threatening to blow out my brains if I did not take him in safety to the court, where his horse was, so that he might get away from the house without any attack being made on him by Tomatis's servants, and I did so immediately. Moszczinski is in the doctor's hands, and will be laid up for some time.

"As soon as it was reported that Branicki was killed, his Uhlfans began to ride about the town, swearing to avenge their colonel and slaughter you. It is very fortunate that you took refuge here. The chief marshal has had the monastery surrounded by two hundred dragoons, ostensibly to prevent your escape but in reality to defend you from Branicki's soldiers.

"The doctors say the *postoli* is in great danger if the ball has injured the intestines but, if not, they answer for his recovery. His fate will be known to-morrow. He now lies at the lord chamberlain's, not daring to have himself carried to his apartments at the palace. The King has been to see him and the general, who was present, told His Majesty that the only thing that saved your life was your threat to aim at Branicki's head. This frightened him and, to keep your ball from his head, he stood in such an awkward position that he missed your vital parts. Otherwise, he would undoubtedly have shot you through the heart, for he can split a bullet into two halves by firing against the blade of a knife. It was also a lucky thing for you that you escaped Bininski, who never thought of looking for you in the wretched sleigh."

"My lord, the most fortunate thing for me is that I did not kill my man outright. Otherwise I should have been cut to pieces just as I went to his help, by three of his servants, who stood over me with drawn swords. However, the *postoli* ordered them to leave me alone. I am sorry for what happened to Your Highness and Count Moszczinski and, if Tomatis was not killed by the madman, it is only because the pistol was charged only with powder."

"That's what I think, for no one heard the bullet; but it was a mere chance"

"Quite so."

Just then an officer of the paladin's came to me with a note from his master, which ran as follows: "Read what the King says to me and sleep well."

The King's note was thus conceived:

"Branicki, my dear uncle, is dangerously wounded. My surgeons are doing all they can for him, but I have not forgotten Casanova. You may assure him that he is pardoned, even if Branicki should die."

I kissed the letter gratefully and showed it to my visitors, who lauded this generous man, truly worthy of being a king.

After this pleasant news I felt in need of rest and my lords left me. As soon as they were gone, Campioni, who had come in before and had stood in the background, came up to me and gave me back the packet of papers and, with tears of joy, congratulated me on the happy issue of the duel.

Next day I had shoals of visitors and many of the chiefs of the party opposed to Branicki sent me purses full of gold. The persons who brought the money said, on behalf of the lord or lady who had sent him, that, being a foreigner, I might be in need of money and that was their excuse for the liberty they were taking. I thanked and refused them all and sent back at least four thousand ducats and was

very proud of having done so. Campioni thought it was absurd and he was right, for I repented afterwards of what I had done. The only present I accepted was a dinner for four persons, which Prince Adam Czartoryski sent me in every day, though the doctor would not let me enjoy it, he being a great believer in diet.

The wound in my stomach was progressing favourably, but on the fourth day the surgeons said my hand was becoming gangrened and they agreed that the only remedy was amputation. I saw this announced in the *Court Gazette* the next morning but, as I had other views on the matter, I laughed heartily at the paragraph. The sheet was printed at night, after the King had placed his initials to the copy. In the morning several persons came to condole with me, but I received their sympathy with great irreverence I was making fun of Count Clary, who sought to persuade me to submit to the operation, when three surgeons came in together.

"Well, gentlemen," said I, "you have mustered in great strength; why is this?"

My regular surgeon replied that he wished to have the opinion of the other two before proceeding to amputation, and they would require to look at the wound.

The dressing was lifted and gangrene was declared to be undoubtedly present and execution was ordered for that evening. The butchers gave me the news with radiant faces and assured me I need not be afraid, as the operation would certainly prove efficacious.

"Gentlemen," I replied, "you seem to have a great many solid scientific reasons for cutting off my hand, but one thing you have not got and that is my consent. My hand is my own and I am going to keep it."

"Sir, it is certainly gangrened; by to-morrow the arm will begin to mortify and then you will have to lose your arm"

"Very good; if that prove so, you shall cut off my arm, but I happen to know something of gangrene and there is none about me."

"You cannot know as much about it as we do."

"Possibly; but, as far as I can make out, you know nothing at all."

"That's rather a strong expression."

"I don't care whether it be strong or weak, you can go now"

In a couple of hours everyone whom the surgeons had told of my obstinacy came pestering me. Even the prince-palatine wrote me that the King was extremely surprised at my lack of courage. This stung me to the quick and I wrote the King a long letter, half in earnest, half in jest, in which I laughed at the ignorance of the surgeons and at the simplicity of those who took whatever they said for gospel truth. I added that, as an arm without a hand would be quite as useless as no arm at all, I meant to wait till it was necessary to cut off the arm.

My letter was read at Court and people wondered how a man with gangrene could write a long letter of four pages. Lubomirski told me kindly that I was mistaken in laughing at my friends, for the three best surgeons in Warsaw could not be mistaken in such a simple case.

"My lord, they are not deceived themselves, but they want to deceive me."

"Why should they?"

"To make themselves agreeable to Branicki, who is in a dangerous state and might possibly get better if he heard that my hand had been taken off."

"Really, that seems an incredible idea to me!"

"What will Your Highness say on the day when I am proved to be right?"

"I shall say you are deserving of the highest praise, but that day must first come."

"We shall see this evening and I give you my word that, if any gangrene has attacked the arm, I will have it cut off to-morrow morning."

Four surgeons came to see me. My arm was pronounced to be twice its natural size and of a livid colour up to the elbow; but, when the lint was taken off the wound, I could see for myself that it was progressing admirably. However, I said nothing, although I had joy in my heart. Prince Augustus Sulkowski and Abbé Gouvel were present, the latter being attached to the paladin's court. The judgment of the surgeons was that the arm was gangrened and must be amputated by the next morning at the latest.

I was tired of arguing with these rascals, so I told them to bring their instruments and I would submit to the operation. At this, they went away in high glee to tell the news at the Court, to Branicki, to the paladin and so forth. I merely gave my servants orders to send them away when they should come again.

I can dwell no more on this matter, though it is interesting enough to me. However, the reader will no doubt be obliged to me by my simply saying that a French surgeon in Prince Sulkowski's household took charge of the case in defiance of professional etiquette and cured me perfectly, so I have my hand and my arm to this day.

On Easter Day I went to mass with my arm in a sling. My cure had taken only three weeks, but I was not able to put the hand to any active use for eighteen months afterwards. Everyone was obliged to congratulate me on having held out against amputation and the general consent declared the surgeons grossly ignorant, while I was satisfied with thinking them very great knaves.

I must here set down an incident which happened three days after the duel.

I was told that a Jesuit father, sent by the bishop of the diocese, wanted to speak to me in private, and I had him shown in and asked what he wanted

"I have come from my lord-bishop," said he, "to absolve you from the ecclesiastical censure which you have incurred by duelling."

"I am always delighted to receive absolution, father, but only after I have confessed my guilt. In the present case, I have nothing to confess; I was attacked and I defended myself. Pray thank my lord

for his kindness. If you like to absolve me without confession, I shall be much obliged."

"If you do not confess, I cannot give you absolution; but you can do this: ask me to absolve you, in case you fought a duel."

"Certainly; I shall be glad if you will absolve me, supposing it was a duel."

The delightful Jesuit gave me absolution in similar terms. He was like his brethren—never at a loss when a loophole of any kind is required.

Three days before I left the monastery, that is on Holy Thursday, the marshal withdrew my guard. After I had been to mass on Easter Day, I went to Court and, as I kissed the King's hand, he asked me (as had been arranged) why I wore my arm in a sling. I said I had been suffering from a chill and he replied, with a meaning smile, "Take care not to catch another."

After my visit to the King, I called on Branicki, who had made daily inquiries after my health and had sent me back my sword. He was condemned to stay in bed for six weeks longer, at least, for the wad of my pistol had entered into the wound and, in extracting it, the opening had to be enlarged, which had retarded his recovery. The King had just appointed him chief huntsman, not so exalted an office as chamberlain, but a more lucrative one. It was said he got the place because he was such a good shot; but, if that were the reason, I had a better claim to it, for I had proved the better shot—for one day, at all events.

I entered an enormous ante-room, in which stood officers, footmen, pages and lacqueys, all gazing at me with the greatest astonishment. I asked if my lord was to be seen, and begged the doorkeeper to send in my name. He did not answer but sighed and went into his master's room. Directly after he came out and begged me, with a profound bow, to step in.

Branicki, who was dressed in a magnificent gown and supported by pillows and cushions, greeted me by taking off his nightcap. He was as pale as death.

"I have come here, my lord," I began, "to offer you my service and to assure you how I regret that I did not pass over a few trifling words of yours."

"You have no reason to reproach yourself, M. Casanova."

"Your excellency is very kind. I am also come to say that, by fighting with me, you have done me an honour which completely swallows up all offence, and I trust that you will give me your protection in future."

"I confess I insulted you, but you will allow that I have paid for it. As to my friends, I openly say that they are my enemies unless they treat you with respect. Bininski has been cashiered and his nobility taken from him; he is well served. As to my protection, you have no need of it; the King esteems you highly, as do I and all men of honour.

"The wound is healing with difficulty. If I had imitated you, I should no longer be in the land of the living; I am told you ate an excellent dinner?"

"Yes, my lord, I was afraid I might never have a chance of dining again."

"If I had dined, your ball would have pierced the intestine; but, being empty, it yielded to the bullet and let it pass by harmlessly."

I heard afterwards that, on the day of the duel, Branicki had gone to confession and mass and had communicated. The priest could not refuse him absolution if he said that honour obliged him to fight, for this was in accordance with the ancient laws of chivalry. As for me, I only addressed these words to God, "Lord, if my enemy kill me, I shall be damned; deign, therefore, to preserve me from death. Amen."

After a long and pleasant conversation, I took leave of the hero, to visit the high constable, Count Bielinski, brother of Countess Salmor. He was a very old man but the sovereign administrator of justice in Poland. I had never spoken to him, but he had defended me from Branicki's Uhlans and had made out my pardon, so I felt bound to go and thank him.

I sent in my name, and the worthy old man greeted me with, "What can I do for you?"

"I have come to kiss the hand of the kindly man who signed my pardon, and to promise your excellency to be more discreet in future."

"I advise you to be more discreet, indeed. As for your pardon, thank the King, for, if he had not requested me especially to grant it you, I should have had you beheaded."

"In spite of the extenuating circumstances, my lord?"

"What circumstances? Did you or did you not fight a duel?"

"That is not a proper way of putting it; I was obliged to defend myself. You might have charged me with fighting a duel if Branicki had taken me outside the ban, as I requested, but, as it was, he took me where he willed and made me fight. Under these circumstances I am sure your excellency would have spared my head."

"I really can't say. The King requested that you be pardoned and that shows he believes you to be deserving of pardon, I congratulate you on his good will. I shall be pleased if you will dine with me to-morrow."

"My lord, I am delighted to accept your invitation."

The illustrious old constable was a man of great intelligence. He had been a bosom friend of the celebrated Poniatowski, the King's father. We had a good deal of conversation together at dinner the next day.

"What a comfort it would have been to your excellency's friend," said I, "if he could have lived to see his son crowned King of Poland."

"He would never have consented."

The vehemence with which he pronounced these words gave me a

deep insight into his feelings. He was of the Saxon party. The same day, that is, on Easter Day, I dined at the paladin's.

"Political reasons," said he, "prevented me from visiting you at the monastery, but you must not think I had forgotten you, for you were constantly in my thoughts. I am going to lodge you here, for my wife is very fond of your society; but the rooms will not be ready for another six weeks."

"I shall take the opportunity, my lord, of paying a visit to the Paladin of Kiowia, who has honoured me with an invitation to come and see him."

"Who gave you the invitation?"

"Count Bruhl, who is in Dresden; his wife is a daughter of the paladin."

"That journey is an excellent idea, for this duel of yours has made you innumerable enemies, and I only hope you will have to fight no more duels. I give you fair warning; be on your guard and never go on foot, especially at night."

I spent a fortnight in going out to dinner and supper every day. It had become the fashion and, wherever I went, I had to tell the duel story over again. I was rather tired of it myself, but the wish to please and my own self-love were too strong to be resisted. The King was nearly always present, but feigned not to hear me. However, he once asked me, if I had been insulted by a patrician in Venice, whether I would have called him out immediately.

"No, sire, for his patrician pride would have prevented his complying, and I would have had my pains for my trouble."

"Then what would you have done?"

"Sire, I would have restrained myself, though, if a noble Venetian were to insult me in a foreign country, he would have to give me satisfaction."

I called on Prince Moszczinski and Madame Binetti happened to be there; the moment she saw me, she made her escape.

"What has she against me?" I asked the count.

"She is afraid of you because she was the cause of the duel, and now Branicki, who was her lover, will have nothing more to say to her. She hoped he would serve you as he served Tomatis and, instead of that you almost killed her *bravo*. She lays the fault on him for having accepted your challenge, but he has resolved to have done with her."

This Count Moszczinski was both good-hearted and quick-witted and so generous that he ruined himself by making presents. His wounds were beginning to heal but, though I was the indirect cause of his mishap, far from bearing malice against me, he had become my friend.

The person whom I should have expected to be most grateful to me for the duel was Tomatis but, on the contrary, he hated the sight of me and hardly concealed his feelings. I was the living reproach of his cowardice; my wounded hand seemed to show him that he had

loved his money more than his honour. I am sure he would have preferred Branicki to have killed me, for then he would have become an object of general execration and Tomatis would have been received with less contempt in the great houses he still frequented.

I resolved to pay a visit to the discontented partisans, who had recognised the new king only on compulsion and some of whom had not recognised him at all; so I set out with my true friend Campioni and one servant.

Prince Charles of Courland had started for Venice, where I had given him letters for my illustrious friends, who would make his visit a pleasant one. The English ambassador, who had given me an introduction to Prince Adam, had just arrived in Warsaw. I dined with him at the prince's house and the King signified his wish to be of the party. I heard a good deal of conversation about Madame de Geoffrin, an old sweetheart of the King's, whom he had just summoned to Warsaw. The Polish monarch, of whom I cannot speak in too favourable terms, was yet weak enough to listen to slanderous reports against me, which prevented him from making my fortune. I had the pleasure of convincing him that he was mistaken, but I will speak of this later on.

I arrived at Leopold the sixth day after I had left Warsaw, having stopped a couple of days at Prince Zamoiski's; he had forty thousand ducats a year, but also—epilepsy.

"I would give all my goods," said he, "to be cured."

I pitied his young wife. She was very fond of him and yet had to deny him, for his disease always came on him in moments of amorous excitement. She had the bitter task of constantly refusing him and even of running away if he pressed her hard. This great nobleman, who died soon after, lodged me in a splendid room utterly devoid of furniture. This is a Polish custom; one is supposed to bring one's furniture with one.

At Leopold I put up at an hotel but soon had to move from thence to take up my abode with the famous Kaminska, the deadly foe of Branicki, the King and all that party. She was very rich but has since been ruined by conspiracies. She entertained me sumptuously for a week, but the visit was agreeable to neither side, as she could speak only Polish and German. From Leopold I proceeded to a small town, the name of which I forget (the Polish names are very crabbed), to take an introduction from Prince Lubomirski to Joseph Rzewuski, a little old man who wore a long beard as a sign of mourning for the innovations that were being introduced into his country. He was rich, learned, superstitiously religious and exceedingly polite. I stayed with him three days. He was the commander of a stronghold containing a garrison of five hundred men.

On the first day, as I was in his room with some other officers, about eleven o'clock in the morning, another officer came in, whispered to Rzewuski and then came up to me and whispered in my ear, "Venice and St. Mark."

"St. Mark," I answered aloud, "is the patron saint and protector of Venice." And everybody began to laugh.

It dawned upon me that "Venice and St. Mark" was the watchword and I began to apologise profusely and the word was changed.

The old commander spoke to me with great politeness. He never went to Court but had resolved on going to the Diet, to oppose the Russian party with all his might. The poor man, a Pole of the true old leaven, was one of the four whom Repnin arrested and sent to Siberia.

After taking leave of this brave patriot, I went to Christianopol, where lived the famous paladin Potocki, who had been one of the lovers of the Empress Anna Ivanovna. He had founded the town in which he lived and called it after his own name. This nobleman, still a fine man, kept a splendid court. He honoured Count Brühl by keeping me at his house for a fortnight and sending me out every day with his doctor, the famous Styrneus, the sworn foe of Van Swieten, a still more famous physician. Although Styrneus was undoubtedly a learned man, I thought him somewhat extravagant and empirical. His system was that of Asclepiades, considered as exploded since the time of the great Boerhaave; nevertheless, he effected wonderful cures.

In the evenings I was always with the paladin and his court. Play was not heavy and I always won, which was fortunate and, indeed, necessary for me. After an extremely agreeable visit to the paladin, I returned to Leopold, where I amused myself for a week with a pretty girl, who afterwards so captivated Count Potocki, *starost* of Sniatin, that he married her. This is purity of blood with a vengeance in your noble families!

Leaving Leopold, I went to Pulavia, a splendid palace on the Vistula eighteen leagues distant from Warsaw. It belonged to the prince palatine, who had built it himself.

Howsoever magnificent an abode may be, a lonely man will weary of it, unless he has the solace of books or of some great idea. I had neither and boredom soon made itself felt.

A pretty peasant girl came into my room and, finding her to my taste, I tried to make her understand me without the use of speech, but she resisted and shouted so loudly that the doorkeeper came up and asked me coolly, "If you like the girl, why don't you go the proper way to work?"

"What way is that?"

"Speak to her father, who is at hand, and arrange the matter amicably."

"I don't know Polish. Will you carry the thing through?"

"Certainly. I suppose you will give fifty florins?"

"You are laughing at me. I will give a hundred willingly, provided she is a maid and is as submissive as a lamb."

No doubt the arrangement was made without difficulty, for our hymen took place the same evening, but no sooner was the operation completed than the poor lamb fled away in hot haste, which made

me suspect that her father had used rather forcible persuasion with her. I would not have allowed this, had I been aware of it.

The next morning I was offered several girls, but they were not shown to me.

"Where is the girl?" said I. "I want to see her face."

"Never mind about the face if the rest is all right."

"The face is the essential part for me," I replied. "The rest I look upon as an accessory."

He did not understand this. However, some were shown to me, but I did not find any whose face aroused my desires.

As a rule, the Polish women are ugly; a beauty is a miracle, and a pretty woman, a rare exception. At the end of a week of feasting and *ennui*, I returned to Warsaw.

In this manner I saw Podolia and Volhynia, which were rebaptised a few years later with the names of Galicia and Lodomeria, for they are now part of the Austrian Empire. It is said, however, that they are more prosperous than they ever were before.

In Warsaw I found Madame Geoffrin the object of universal admiration and everybody was remarking with what simplicity she was dressed. As for myself, I was received, not coldly, but positively rudely. People said to my face:

"We did not expect to see you here again. Why did you come back?"

"To pay my debts."

This behaviour astonished and disgusted me. The prince-palatine even seemed quite changed towards me. I was still invited to dinner, but no one spoke to me. However, Prince Adam's sister asked me very kindly to come and sup with her and I accepted the invitation with delight. I found myself seated opposite the King, who did not speak one word to me the whole time. He had never behaved to me thus before.

The next day I dined with the Countess Oginski and in the course of dinner the countess asked where the King had supped the night before; nobody seemed to know and I did not answer. Just as we were rising, General Roniker came in and the question was repeated.

"At Princess Strasnikowa's," said the general, "and M. Casanova was there."

"Then why did you not answer my question?" said the countess to me.

"Because I am very sorry to have been there. His Majesty neither spoke to me nor looked at me. I see I am in disgrace but for the life of me I know not why."

On leaving the house, I went to call on Prince Augustus Sulkowski, who welcomed me as of old but told me I had made a mistake in returning to Warsaw, as public opinion was against me.

"What have I done?"

"Nothing; but the Poles are always inconsistent and changeable. *Sarmatarum virtus veluti extra ipsos*. This inconstancy will cost us

dear, sooner or later. Your fortune was made, but you missed the turn of the tide and I advise you to go."

"I will certainly do so, but it seems to me rather hard."

When I got home, my servant gave me a letter which some unknown person had left at my door. I opened it and found it to be anonymous, but I could see it came from a well-wisher. The writer said that the slanderers had got the ear of the King and that I was no longer *persona grata* at Court, as he had been assured that the Parisians had burnt me in effigy for absconding with the lottery money and that I had been a strolling player in Italy and little better than a vagabond.

Such calumnies are easy to utter but hard to refute in a foreign country. At all courts hatred, born of envy, is ever at work. I would have liked to scorn the slanders and leave the country, but I had contracted debts and had not sufficient money to pay them and my expenses to Portugal, where I thought I might do something.

I no longer saw any company, with the exception of Campioni, who seemed more distressed than myself. I wrote to Venice and everywhere else where there was a chance of my getting funds; but one day the general who had been present at the duel called on me and told me (though he seemed ashamed of his task) that the King requested me to leave the ban in the course of a week.

Such a piece of insolence made my blood boil and I informed the general that he might tell the King that I did not feel inclined to obey such an unjust order and that, if I left, I would let all the world know I had been compelled to do so by brute force.

"I cannot take such a message as that," said the general, kindly. "I shall simply tell the King that I have executed his orders and no more; but of course you must follow your own judgment."

In the excess of my indignation I wrote to the King that I could not obey his orders and keep my honour. I said in my letter, "My creditors, sire, will forgive me for leaving Poland without paying my debts when they learn that I have done so only because Your Majesty gave me no choice."

I was thinking how I could ensure this letter reaching the King when who should arrive but Count Moszczinski! I told him what had happened, and asked if he could suggest any means of delivering the letter.

"Give it to me," said he. "I will place it in the King's hands."

As soon as he had gone, I went out to take the air and called on Prince Sulkowski, who was not at all astonished at my news. As if to sweeten the bitter pill I had to swallow, he told me how the Empress of Austria had ordered him to leave Vienna in twenty-four hours, merely because he had complimented the Archduchess Christina on behalf of Prince Louis of Wurtemberg.

The next day Count Moszczinski brought me a present of a thousand ducats from the King, who said that my leaving Warsaw would probably be the means of preserving my life, as in that city I was exposed to danger which I could not expect to escape eventually.

This referred to five or six challenges I had received and to which I had not even taken the trouble to reply. My enemies might possibly assassinate me and the King did not care to be constantly anxious on my account. Count Moszczinski added that the order to leave carried no dishonour with it, considering by whom it had been delivered and the delay it gave me to make my preparations.

The consequence of all this was that I not only gave my word to go but begged the count to thank His Majesty for his kindness and the interest he had been pleased to take in me.

When I gave in, the generous Moszczinski embraced me and begged me to write to him and accept a present of a travelling-carriage as a token of his friendship. He informed me that Madame Binetti's husband had gone off with his wife's maid, taking her diamonds, jewels, linen and even her silver plate and leaving her to the tender mercies of the dancer, Pic. Her admirers had clubbed together to make up to her for what her husband had stolen. I also heard that the King's sister had arrived in Warsaw from Bialistock and it was hoped her husband would follow her. This husband was the real Count Branicki and the Branicki (or rather Branecki, or Bragnecki) who had fought with me was no relation to him whatever.

The following day I paid my debts, which amounted to about two hundred ducats, and made preparations for starting for Breslau the day after with Count Clary, each of us having his own carriage. This Count Clary was leaving without having seen the Court, about which he was little concerned; he liked neither good society nor respectable women; all he wanted was gamblers and prostitutes. Clary was one of those men to whom lying has become a sort of second nature; whenever such an one opens his mouth, you may safely say to him, "You have lied or you are going to lie." If they could feel their own degradation, they would be much to be pitied, for by their own fault at last no one will believe them, even when by chance they speak the truth. This Count Clary, who was not one of the Clarys of Teplitz, could go neither to his own country nor to Vienna, because he had deserted the army on the eve of a battle. He was lame but walked so adroitly that his defect did not appear. If this had been the only truth he concealed, it would have been well, for it was a piece of deception that hurt no one. He died miserably in Venice.

We reached Breslau in perfect safety and without experiencing any adventures. Campioni, who had accompanied me as far as Wurtemberg, returned but rejoined me in Vienna in the course of seven months. Count Clary had left Breslau and I thought I would make the acquaintance of the Abbé Bastiani, a celebrated Venetian whose fortune had been made by the King of Prussia. He was canon of the cathedral and received me cordially; in fact, each mutually desired the other's acquaintance. He was a fine, well built man, fair-complexioned and at least six feet tall. He was also witty, learned, eloquent and gifted with a persuasive voice; his cook was an artist, his library full of choice volumes and his cellar a very good one. He was

well lodged on the ground floor; on the second floor, he accommodated a lady, of whose children he was very fond, possibly because he was perhaps their father. Although a great admirer of the fair sex, his tastes were by no means exclusive and he did not despise love of the Greek or philosophic kind. I could see that he entertained a passion for a young priest whom I met at his table. This young abbé was Count di Cavalcano and Bastiani seemed to adore him, if fiery glances signified anything; but the innocent young man did not seem to understand and I suppose Bastiani did not like to lower his dignity by declaring his love. The canon showed me all the letters he had received from the King of Prussia before he had been made canon. He was the son of a tailor in Venice and became a friar, but, having committed some peccadillo which got him into trouble, he was fortunate enough to be able to make his escape. He fled to The Hague and there met Tron, the Venetian ambassador, who lent him a hundred ducats, with which he made his way to Berlin and to favour with the King. Such are the ways by which men arrive at fortune! *Sequere Deum!*

On the eve of my departure from Breslau I went to pay a call on a baroness for whom I had a letter of introduction from her son, who was an officer of the Polish Court. I sent up my name and was asked to wait a few moments, as the baroness was dressing. I sat down beside a pretty girl, who was neatly dressed in a mantle with a hood. I asked her if she were waiting for the baroness like myself.

"Yes, sir," she replied. "I have come to offer myself as governess for her three daughters."

"What! Governess at your age?"

"Alas, sir, age has nothing to do with necessity. I have neither father nor mother; my brother is a poor lieutenant and cannot help me; what can I do? I can get a livelihood only by turning my good education to account."

"What will your salary be?"

"Fifty wretched crowns—enough to buy my clothing."

"It's very little."

"It is as much as people give."

"Where are you living now?"

"With a poor aunt, where, by sewing from morning till night, I can scarce earn enough bread to keep me alive."

"If you were willing to become my governess, instead of becoming a children's governess, I would give you fifty crowns, not per year, but per month."

"Your governess? Governess to your family, you mean, I suppose?"

"I have no family; I am a bachelor and spend my time travelling. I leave at five o'clock to-morrow morning for Dresden and, if you wish to come with me, there is a place for you in my carriage. I am staying at such and such an inn. Come there with your trunk and we will start together."

"You are joking; besides, I don't know you."

"I am not jesting; and we would get to know each other perfectly well in twenty-four hours; that is ample time."

My serious air convinced the girl that I was not making fun of her, but she was still very much astonished, while I was very much astonished to find I had gone so far when I had only intended to joke. In trying to win over the girl, I had won over myself. It seemed to me a rare adventure and I was delighted to see, by the side-glances she kept casting in my direction to see if I was laughing at her, that she was giving it serious consideration. I began to think that Fate had brought us together in order that I might become the architect of her fortune. I had no doubt whatever as to her virtue or her feelings for me, for I was getting infatuated. To put the finishing stroke on the affair, I drew out two ducats and gave them to her as an earnest of her first month's wages. She took them timidly but seemed convinced that I was not imposing on her

By this time, the baroness was ready. She welcomed me very kindly, but I said I could not accept her invitation to dine with her the following day, as I was leaving at daybreak. I replied to all the questions that a fond mother asks concerning her son, and then took leave of the worthy lady. As I went out, I noticed that the would-be governess had disappeared. The rest of the day I spent with the canon, making good cheer, playing *ombre*, drinking hard and talking about girls or literature. The next day my carriage came to the door at the time I had arranged and I went off without thinking of the girl I had met at the baroness's. But we had not gone two hundred paces when the postillion stopped, a bundle of linen whirled through the window into the carriage and the governess got in. I gave her a hearty welcome by embracing her and made her sit down beside me and so we drove off.

In the ensuing chapter the reader will become more fully acquainted with my fresh conquest. In the meantime let him imagine me rolling peacefully along the road to Dresden.

CHAPTER 121

WHEN I saw myself in the carriage with this pretty girl, who had fallen on me as if from the clouds, I imagined I was intended to shape her destiny. Her tutelary genius must have placed her in my hands, for I felt inclined to do her all the good that lay in my power. But was it to my good or evil genius that I owed her? I formed the question but felt that time alone could give the answer. I knew that I was still living in my old style, while I was beginning to feel I was no longer a young man.

I was sure that my new companion could not have abandoned herself to me in this manner without having made up her mind to be complaisant; but this was not enough for me; it was my humour to be loved. This was my chief aim; everything else was only fleeting enjoyment and, as I had not had a love affair since parting from Zaire, I

hoped most fervently that the present adventure would prove to be one.

Before long, I learnt that my companion's name was Maton, that, at least, was her surname and I did not feel any curiosity to know the name of the saint whom her godmothers had constituted her patron at the baptismal font. I asked her if she could write French as well as she spoke it, and she showed me a letter of her own writing. It assured me that she had received an excellent education and this fact increased my pleasure in the conquest I had made. She said she had left Breslau without telling her aunt or her cousin that she was going, perhaps never to return.

"How about your belongings?"

"Belongings? They are not worth the trouble of gathering together. All I have is included in that small package, which contains a chemise, a pair of stockings, some handkerchiefs and a few nicknacks."

"What will your lover say?"

"Alas! I haven't one to say anything."

"I cannot credit that."

"I have had two lovers; the first was a rascal, who took advantage of my innocence to seduce me and then left me when I ceased to offer any novelty for him; my second was an honest man, but a poor lieutenant with no prospects of getting on. He has not abandoned me, but his regiment was ordered to Stettin and since then . . ."

"And since then?"

"We were too poor to write to one another, so we had to suffer in silence."

This pathetic history seemed to bear the marks of truth and I thought it very possible that Maton had come with me only to make her fortune or to do rather better than she had been doing, which would not be difficult. She was twenty-five years old and, as she had never been out of Breslau before, she would doubtless be delighted to see what the world was like in Dresden. I could not help feeling that I had been a fool to burden myself with the girl, who would most likely cost me a lot of money; but still I found my conduct excusable, as the chances were a hundred to one against her accepting the proposal I had been foolish enough to make. In short, I resolved to enjoy the pleasure of having a pretty girl all to myself and determined not to do anything during my journey, being anxious to see whether her moral qualities would plead as strongly with me as her physical beauty undoubtedly did. At nightfall I stopped, wishing to spend the night at the posting-station. Maton, who had been very hungry all day but had not dared to tell me so, ate with an amazing and pleasing appetite; but, not being accustomed to wine, she would have fallen asleep at table if I had not urged her to retire. She begged my pardon, assuring me she would not let such a thing occur again. I smiled by way of reply and stayed at the table, not looking to see whether she undressed or went to bed in her clothes. I went to bed myself soon after and at five o'clock was up again, to order the coffee and see that the horses were put in. Maton was lying on her bed with all her clothes on, fast asleep and perspiring

with the heat. I woke her, telling her that another time she must sleep more comfortably, as such heats were injurious to health.

She got up and left the room, no doubt to wash, for she returned looking fresh and gay and bade me good day and asked if I was willing to give her a kiss.

"I shall be delighted," I replied and, after kissing her, I made her hurry over the breakfast, as I wished to reach Dresden that evening. However, I could not manage it; my carriage broke down and took five hours to mend, so I had to sleep at another posting-station. Maton undressed this time, but I had the firmness not to look at her.

When I reached Dresden, I put up at the Hôtel de Saxe, taking the whole of the first floor. My mother was in the country and I paid her a visit, much to her delight; we made quite an affecting picture, with my arm in a sling. I saw also my brother John and his wife, Thérèse Roland, a Roman girl whom I had known before he did and who made much of me. I saw also my sister and then went with my brother to pay my suit to Count Brühl and his wife, the daughter of the Paladin of Kiowia, who was delighted to hear news of her family. I was welcomed everywhere, and everywhere I had to tell the story of my duel. I confess that very little pressing was required, for I was very proud of it.

At this period the States were assembled in Dresden and Prince Xavier, during the minority of the Elector, the eldest of his uncles, was regent.

The same evening I went to the opera house, where faro was played. I played, but prudently, for my capital consisted of only eighteen hundred ducats.

When I came back, we had a good supper and Maton pleased me both by her appetite and by her amiability. When we had finished, I affectionately asked her if she would like to share my bed and she replied as tenderly that she was wholly mine. And so, after passing a voluptuous night, we rose in the morning, the best friends in the world.

I spent the whole morning in furnishing her toilette. A good many people called on me and wanted to be presented to Maton, but my answer was that, as she was only my housekeeper and not my wife, I could not have the pleasure of introducing her. In the same way I instructed her that she was not to let anyone in when I was away. She was working in her room on the linen I had provided for her, aided in her task by a seamstress. Nevertheless, I did not want to make her a slave, so I occasionally took her into the pleasant suburbs of Dresden, where she was at liberty to speak to any of my acquaintances we might meet.

This reserve of mine, which lasted for the fortnight we stayed in Dresden, was mortifying for all the young officers in the place and especially for the Comte de Bellegarde, who was not accustomed to being denied any girl to whom he chose to take a fancy. He was a fine young fellow, of great boldness and even impudence, and one day he came into our room and asked me to invite him to dinner, just as Maton and myself were sitting down to table. I could not refuse him and I could not

request Maton to leave the room, so from the beginning to the end of the meal he showered his military jokes and attentions on her, though he was perfectly polite the whole time. Maton behaved very well; she was not prudish, nor did she forget the respect she owed to me and, indeed, to herself.

I was accustomed to take a siesta every day after dinner, so half an hour after the conclusion of the meal I stated the fact and begged him to leave us. He asked smilingly if the lady took a siesta, too, and I replied that we usually took it together. This made him take up his hat and cane and, as he did so, he asked us both to dine with him the next day. I replied that I never took Maton out anywhere but that he would be welcome to come and take pot-luck with us every day if he liked.

This refusal exhausted his resources and he took his leave, if not angrily, at least very coldly.

My mother returned to her town apartments, which were opposite to mine, and the next day, when I was calling on her, I noticed the *erker* (a sort of grating in the Spanish fashion) which indicated my rooms in the hotel. I happened to look in that direction and saw Maton at the window, standing up and talking to M. de Bellegarde, who was at a neighbouring window. This window belonged to a room which adjoined my suite of rooms but did not belong to it. This discovery amused me. I knew what I was about and did not fear to be made a cuckold in spite of myself. I was sure I had not been observed and I was not going to allow any trespassers. I was jealous, in fact; but the jealousy was of the mind, not the heart.

I came in to dinner in the highest spirits and Maton was as gay as myself. I led the conversation around to Bellegarde and said I believed him to be in love with her.

"Oh, he is like all officers with girls; but I don't think he is more in love with me than with any other girl."

"Oh, but didn't he come to call on me this morning?"

"Certainly not; and, if he had come, the maid would have told him you were out."

"Did you notice him walking up and down under the windows?"

"No."

This was enough for me; I knew they had laid a plot together. Maton was deceiving me and I would be cheated in twenty-four hours, unless I took care. At my age such treason should not have astonished me, but my vanity would not allow me to admit the fact.

I dissembled my feelings and caressed the traitress and then, leaving the house, went to the theatre, where I played with some success and returned home while the second act was in progress; it was still daylight. The waiter was at the door and I asked him whether there were any rooms on the second floor besides those which I was occupying.

"Yes, two rooms, both facing on the street."

"Tell the landlord I will take them both."

"They were taken yesterday evening."

"By whom?"

"By a Swiss officer, who is entertaining a party of friends to supper here this evening."

I said no more, lest I should awaken suspicion; but I felt sure that Bellegarde could easily obtain access to my rooms from his. Indeed, there was a door leading to the room where Maton slept with her maid when I did not care to have her in my room. The door was bolted on her side, but, as she was in the plot, there was not much security in that.

I went upstairs softly and, finding Maton on the balcony, I said, after some indifferent conversation, that I should like to change rooms.

"You shall have my room," I said, "and I will have yours; I can read there and see the people going by."

She thought it a very good idea and added that it would serve us both if I would allow her to sit there when I was out.

This reply showed me that Maton was an old hand and that I had better give her up if I did not wish to be duped.

I changed the rooms and we supped pleasantly together, laughing and talking and, in spite of all her craftiness, Maton did not notice any change in me.

I remained alone in my new room and soon heard the voices of Bellegarde and his merry companions. I went out on the balcony, but the curtains of Bellegarde's room were drawn, as if to assure me that there was no complot. However, I was not so easily deceived and I found afterwards that Mercury had warned Jupiter that Amphitryon had changed his room.

The next day a severe headache, a thing from which I seldom suffer, confined me to the house all day. I had myself let blood and my worthy mother, who came to keep me company, dined with Maton. My mother had taken a fancy to the girl and had often asked me to let her come and see her, but I had had the good sense to refuse this request. The next day I was still far from well and took a physic and in the evening, to my horror, I found myself attacked by a fearful disease. This was a present from Maton, for I had not known anyone else since leaving Leopold. I spent a troubled night, rage and indignation being my principal emotions; and next morning, having risen at break of day, I went into Maton's room and, uncovering her quickly, saw the most disgusting sight one could imagine. The wretched creature confessed she had been infected for the last six months, but had hoped not to give it me, as she had washed herself carefully.

"Wretch, you have poisoned me; but nobody shall know it, as it is my own fault and I am ashamed of it. Get up and you shall see how generous I can be."

She got up and I had all the linen I had given her packed into a trunk. This done, I told my man to take a small room for her at another inn. His errand was soon over and I then told Maton to go immediately, as I had done with her. I gave her fifty crowns and made her sign a receipt specifying the reason why I had sent her away and acknowledging that she had no further claim upon me. The conditions

were humiliating and she wished me to soften them down, but she soon gave in when I told her that, unless she signed, I would turn her into the streets as naked as when I found her.

"What am I to do here? I don't know anyone."

"If you wish to return to Breslau, I will pay your expenses there."

She made no answer, so I sent her away bag and baggage and merely turned my back on her when she went down on her knees to excite my compassion.

I got rid of her without the slightest feeling of pity for, from what she had done to me and from what she was preparing to do, I considered her as a mere monster, who would sooner or later have cost me my life.

I left the inn the following day and took a furnished apartment on the first floor of the house where my mother lived for six months, and proceeded about my cure. Everyone asked me what I had done with my housekeeper and I said that, having no further need of her services, I had discharged her.

A week afterwards my brother John came to tell me that Bellegarde and five of six of his friends were on the sick list; Maton had certainly lost no time.

"I am sorry for them, but it's their own fault; why didn't they take more care?"

"But the girl came to Dresden with you."

"Yes, and I sent her about her business. It was enough for me to keep them off while she was under my charge. Tell them that, if they complain of me, they are wrong and still more wrong to publish their shame. Let them learn discretion and get themselves cured in secrecy, if they do not want sensible men to laugh at them. Don't you think I am right?"

"The adventure is not a very honourable one for you."

"I know it and that's why I say nothing; I am not such a fool as to proclaim my shame from the housetops. These friends of yours must be simpletons indeed; they must have known that I had good reasons for sending the girl away, and should consequently have been on their guard. They deserve what they got and I hope it may be a lesson to them."

"They are all astonished at your being well."

"You may comfort them by saying that I have been as badly treated as they but have held my tongue, not wishing to pass for a simpleton."

Poor John saw he had been a simpleton himself, and departed in silence. I put myself on a severe diet and by the middle of August my health was re-established.

About this time Prince Adam Czartoryski's sister came to Dresden, lodging with Count Brühl. I had the honour of paying my court to her and heard from her own mouth that her royal cousin had had the weakness to let himself be imposed on by calumnies about me. I told her I was of Ariosto's opinion—that all the virtues are worth nothing unless they are covered with the veil of constancy.

"You saw yourself, when I supped with you, how His Majesty com-

pletely ignored me. I am sorry for the monarch who under such circumstances forfeits his claim to the esteem of the philosopher. Your Highness will be going to Paris next year; you will meet me there and you can write to the King that, if I had been burnt in effigy, I should not have ventured to show myself."

The September fair being a great occasion at Leipzig, I went there to regain my weight by eating larks, for which Leipzig is justly famous. I had played a cautious but winning game in Dresden, the result of which had been the gain of some hundreds of ducats, so I was able to start for Leipzig with a letter of credit for three thousand crowns on the banker Hoffmann, an intelligent old man of upwards of eighty. It was of him I heard that the hair of the Empress of Russia, which looked a dark brown, or even black, had been originally quite fair. The old banker had seen her in Stettin every day between her seventh and tenth years and told me that even then they had begun to comb her hair with lead combs and rub a certain composition into it. From an early age Catherine had been looked upon as the future bride of the Duke of Holstein, afterwards the hapless Peter III. The Russians are fair as a rule and so it was thought fit that the reigning family should be dark.

Here I will note down a pleasant adventure I had in Leipzig. The Princess of Aremberg had arrived from Vienna and was staying at the same hotel as myself. She took a fancy to go to the fair incognito and, as she had a large suite, she dressed up one of her maids as the princess and mingled with her following. I suppose my readers to be aware that this princess was witty and beautiful and was the favourite mistress of the Emperor Francis I. I heard of this masquerade and, leaving my hotel at the same time, I followed her till she stopped at a stall, and then, going up to her and addressing her as one would any other maid, I asked if that (pointing at the false princess) was really the famous Princess of Aremberg.

"Certainly," she replied.

"I can scarcely believe it, for she is not pretty and she has neither the look nor the manners of a princess."

"Perhaps you are not a good judge of princesses."

"I have seen enough of them anyhow and, to prove that I am a good judge, I say that it is you who ought to be the princess. I would willingly give a hundred ducats to spend the night with you."

"A hundred ducats! What would you do if I were to take you at your word?"

"Try me. I lodge at the same hotel as you and, if you can contrive ways and means, I will give you the money in advance, but not till I am sure of my prize, for I don't like being taken in."

"Very good. Say not a word to anyone but try to speak with me before or after supper. If you are brave enough to face certain risks, we will spend the night together."

"What is your name?"

"Caroline."

I felt certain it would come to nothing but I was glad to have amused

the princess and to have let her know that I appreciated her beauties, and I resolved to go on with the part I was playing

About supper-time, I began a promenade near the princess's apartments, stopping every now and then in front of the room where her women were sitting, till one of them came out to ask me if I wanted anything.

"I want to speak for a moment to one of your companions to whom I had the pleasure of talking at the fair "

"You mean Caroline, I expect?"

"Yes."

"She is waiting on the princess, but she will be out in half an hour."

I spent this half hour in my own room and then returned to dance attendance. Before long, the same maid to whom I had spoken came up to me and told me to wait in a closet which she showed me, telling me that Caroline would be there before long. I went into the closet, which was small, dark and uncomfortable. I was soon joined by a woman. This time I was sure it was the real Caroline, but I said nothing.

She came in, took my hand and told me that, if I would wait there, she would come to me as soon as her mistress was in bed.

"Without any light?"

"Of course, or else the people of the house would notice it and I should not like that."

"I cannot do anything without a light, charming Caroline, and besides, this closet is not a very nice place to pass five or six hours. There is another alternative; the first room above is mine. I shall be alone and I swear to you that no one will come in; come up and make me happy; I have the hundred ducats here."

"Impossible! I dare not go upstairs for a million ducats."

"So much the worse for you, as I am not going to stay in this hole, which has only a chair in it, if you offer me a million and a half. Farewell, sweet Caroline."

"Wait a moment; let me go first."

The sly puss went out quickly enough, but I was as sharp as she and trod on the tail of her dress, so that she could not shut the door after her. So we went out together, and I left her at the door saying:

"Good night, Caroline. The trap was poorly baited."

I went to bed well pleased with the incident. The princess, it was plain, had intended to make me pass the night in that hole of a closet, as a punishment for having dared to ask the mistress of an emperor to sleep with me for a hundred crowns.

Two days later, as I was buying a pair of lace cuffs, the princess came into the shop with Count Zinzendorf, whom I had known in Paris twelve years before. Just as I was making way for the lady, the count recognised me and asked me if I knew anything about the Casanova who had fought the duel in Warsaw.

"Alas! count, I am that Casanova and here is my arm still in a sling."

"I congratulate you, my dear fellow; I would like to hear about it."

With these words, he introduced me to the princess, asking if she had heard of the duel.

"Yes; I heard something about it in the papers. So this is the hero of the tale. Delighted to make your acquaintance."

The princess spoke with great kindness but with the cool politeness of the Court. She did not give me the slightest sign of recognition and of course I imitated her in her reserve.

I visited the count in the afternoon and he begged me to come and see the princess, who would be delighted to hear the account of my duel from my own lips; I followed him to her apartment with pleasure. The princess listened to my narrative in stately manner and her women never looked at me. She went away the day after and the story went no farther.

Towards the end of the fair I received a very unexpected visit from the fair Madame Castelbajac. I was just sitting down to table to eat a dozen larks when she made her appearance.

"What, madame, you here!"

"Yes, to my sorrow. I have been here for the last three weeks and have seen you several times, but you have always avoided us."

"Who are 'us'?"

"Schwerin and myself."

"Schwerin is here, is he?"

"Yes; and in prison on account of a forged bill. I am sure I do not know what they will do to the poor wretch. He would have been wise to have fled, but it seems as if he wanted to get hanged."

"And you have been with him ever since you left England, that is, three years ago?"

"Exactly. Our occupation is robbing, cheating and escaping from one land to another. Never was a woman so unhappy as I."

"For how much is the forged bill?"

"For three hundred crowns. Do a generous action, M. Casanova, and let bygones be bygones; deliver the poor wretch from the gallows and me from death for, if he is hanged, I shall kill myself."

"Indeed, madame, he may hang for all of me, for he did his best to send me to the gallows with his forged bills; but I confess I pity you—so much, indeed, that I invite you to come to Dresden with me the day after to-morrow and I promise to give you three hundred crowns as soon as Schwerin has undergone the extreme penalty of the law. I can't understand how a woman like you can have fallen in love with a man who has neither face, talents, wit nor fortune, for all that he has to boast of is his name of Schwerin."

"I confess, to my shame, that I never loved him. Ever since the other rogue, Castelbajac—who, by the way, was never married to me—made me acquainted with him, I have lived with him only by force, though his tears and his despair have excited my compassion. If destiny had given me an honest man to take his place, I would have forsaken Schwerin long ago, for sooner or later he will be the death of me"

"Where do you live?"

"Nowhere. I have been turned out into the street with nothing but the clothes on my back. Have compassion on me!"

With these words, the hapless woman threw herself at my knees and burst into tears. I was much affected. The waiter of the inn stood staring with amazement, till I told him to go out. I may safely say that this woman was one of the handsomest in France; she was probably about twenty-six years old. She had been the wife of a druggist of Montpellier and had been so unfortunate as to let Castelbajac seduce her. In London her beauty had produced no impression on me, my heart was another's; nevertheless, she was made to seduce the heart of man.

I raised her from her knees and said I felt inclined to help her but in the first place, she must calm herself and, in the second, share my supper. The waiter brought another bed and put it in my room without receiving any order to do so; this made me feel inclined to laugh.

The appetite with which the poor woman ate, despite her sorrow, reminded me of the Matron of Ephesus. When supper was over, I gave her her choice—she might either stay in Leipzig and fare as best she might, or I would reclaim her effects, take her with me to Dresden and pay her a hundred gold ducats as soon as I could be certain that she would not give the money to the wretch who had reduced her to such an extremity. She did not require much time for reflection. She said it would be no good for her to stay in Leipzig, for she could do nothing for the wretched Schwerin or even keep herself for a day, for she had not a farthing. She would have to beg or become a prostitute and she could not make up her mind to either course.

"Indeed," she concluded, "if you were to give me the hundred ducats this moment and I used them to free Schwerin, I should be no better off than before; so I accept your generous offer thankfully."

I embraced her, promised to get back what her landlord had seized for rent and then begged her to go to bed, as she was in need of rest.

"I see," she answered, "that, either out of liking or for politeness' sake, you will ask me for those favours which I should be only too happy to grant but, if I allowed that, it would be a bad return indeed for your kindness. Behold in what a state that unhappy wretch has left me!"

I saw that I ran the risk of being infected again and thanked her for warning me of the danger I ran. In spite of her faults, she was a woman of feeling and had an excellent heart and from these good qualities of hers proceeded all her misfortunes.

The next morning I arranged for the redemption of her effects, which cost me sixty crowns of Saxony, and in the afternoon the poor woman saw herself once more in possession of her belongings, which she had thought never to see again. She seemed profoundly grateful and deplored her state, which hindered her from proving the warmth of her feelings.

Such is the way of women; a grateful woman has only one way of showing her gratitude and that is to surrender herself without reserve.

A man is different, but we are differently constituted, a man is made to give and a woman to receive.

The next day, a short while before we left, the broker I had employed in the redemption of the lady's effects told me that the banker whom Schwerin had cheated was going to send an express to Berlin, to enquire whether the King would object to Count Schwerin's being proceeded against with the utmost rigour of the law.

"Alas!" cried his late mistress, "that's what he was most afraid of. It's all up with him. The King of Prussia will pay his debts, but he will end his days in Spandau. Why didn't they put him there before I ever knew him?"

She left Leipzig with me and our appearance in Dresden caused a good deal of surprise. She was not a mere girl, like Maton; she had a good appearance and a modest, yet distinguished, manner. I called her Countess Blasin and introduced her to my mother and my relatives and put her in my best room. I sent for the doctor who had treated me and made him swear not to disclose the countess's state but to tell everyone that he was coming to see me. I took her to the theatre and it was my humour to have her regarded as a person of distinction. Good treatment soon restored her to health and by the end of November she believed herself in a state to reward me for my kindness.

The wedding was a secret one but none the less pleasant and, as if by way of wedding present, the next day I heard that the King of Prussia had paid Schwerin's debts and had had him brought to Berlin under a strong escort. If he is alive, the rascal is in Spandau to this day.

The time had come for me to pay her the hundred ducats. I told her frankly that I was obliged to go to Portugal and could not make my appearance there in company with a pretty woman without failing in my project. I added that my means would not allow me to pay double expenses for so long a journey.

She had received too many proofs of my love to think for a moment that I had grown tired of her and wanted to be on with some other woman. She told me she owed everything to me, while I owed nothing to her, and that all she asked of me was to enable her to return to Montpellier.

"I have relatives there," said she, "who will be glad to see me, and I hope that my husband will let me return to him. I am the Prodigal Son and I hope to find in him the forgiving father."

I told her I would do my utmost to send her home in safety and comfort.

Towards the middle of December, I left Dresden with Madame Blasin. My purse contained only four hundred ducats, for I had had a run of bad luck at play and the journey to Leipzig had cost me altogether three hundred ducats. I told my mistress nothing of all this, for my only thought was how to please her.

We stayed a short while in Prague and reached Vienna on Christmas Day. We put up at The Red Bull, the Countess Blasin (who had been

transformed into a milliner) in one room and I in another, so that we might pass for strangers, while continuing our intimacy.

The next morning, as we were taking coffee together, two individuals came into the room and asked the rude question, "Who are you, madame?"

"My name is Blasin."

"Who is this gentleman?"

"You had better ask him."

"What are you doing in Vienna?"

"Taking coffee. I should have thought you could see that for yourselves."

"If the gentleman is not your husband, you will leave the town within twenty-four hours."

"The gentleman is my friend and not my husband and I shall leave Vienna exactly when I choose, unless you make me go away by force."

"Very good. We are aware, sir, that you have a separate room, but that makes no difference."

Thereupon one of the policemen entered my room, I following him.

"What do you want here?" said I.

"I am looking at your bed and I can see you have not slept in it. That's enough."

"The Devil! What business have you here at all and who authorises such disgraceful proceedings?"

He made no reply but returned to Madame Blasin's room, where they ordered her to leave Vienna in the course of twenty-four hours and then they both left us.

"Dress yourself," said I to her, "and tell the French ambassador the whole story. Tell him you are a milliner, Blasin by name, and that all you want is to go from here to Strasburg and from there to Montpellier."

While she was dressing, I ordered a carriage and a servant to be in attendance. She returned in an hour's time and said the ambassador had assured her she would be left alone and need not leave Vienna till she thought fit. I took her to mass in triumph and then, as the weather was bad, we spent the rest of the day eating and drinking and sitting by the fire.

At eight o'clock in the evening the landlord came up and said very politely that he had been ordered by the police to give the lady a room at some distance from mine and that he was obliged to obey.

"I am quite ready to change my room," said Madame Blasin, with a smile.

"Is the lady to sup alone?" I asked.

"I have received no instructions on that point."

"Then I will sup with her and I hope you will treat us well."

"You shall be well served, sir."

In spite of the detestable and tyrannical police, we spent the last four nights together in the closest intimacy. When she left, I wanted her to take fifty louis, but she would accept only thirty, saying that

she could travel to Montpellier on that sum and have money in her pocket when she got there. Our parting was an affecting one. She wrote to me from Strasburg and we shall hear of her again when I describe my visit to Montpellier.

The first day of the year 1767, I took an apartment in the house of a certain Mr. Schröder and I took letters of introduction to Madame de Salmor and Madame de Stahremberg. I then called on the elder Calsabigi, who was in the service of Prince Kaunitz.

This Calsabigi, whose whole body was one mass of eruption, always worked in bed and the minister, his master, went to see him almost every day. I went constantly to the theatre, where Madame Vestris was dancing. On January seventh or eighth, I saw the Empress Dowager come to the theatre, dressed in black; she was received with applause, as this was the first appearance she had made since the death of her husband. In Vienna I met the Comte de la Pérouse, who was trying to induce the Empress to give him half a million florins, which Charles VI owed his father. Through him I made the acquaintance of the Spaniard Las Casas, a man of intelligence and, what is a rare thing in a Spaniard, free from prejudices. I also met at the count's house the Venetian Uccelli, with whom I had been at St. Cyprian's College at Murano; he was, at the time of which I write, secretary to the ambassador, Polo Renieri. This gentleman had a great esteem for me, but my affair with the State Inquisitors prevented him from receiving me. My friend Campioni arrived at this date from Warsaw; he had passed through Cracovia. I accommodated him in my apartment with great pleasure. He had an engagement in London but, to my great delight, he was able to spend a couple of months with me.

Prince Charles of Courland, who had been in Venice and had been well received by M. de Bragadin and my other friends, had been in Vienna and had left it a fortnight before my arrival to return to Venice. Prince Charles wrote to tell me that there were no bounds to the care and kindness of my Venetian friends and that he would be grateful to me all his days.

I lived very quietly in Vienna; my health was good and I thought of nothing but my journey to Portugal, which I intended should take place in the spring. I saw no company of any kind, whether good or ill. I often called on Calsabigi, who made a parade of his atheism and slandered my friend Metastasio, who despised him. Calsabigi knew it and laughed at him; he was a profound politician and the right hand of Prince Kaunitz.

One day after dinner, as I was sitting at table with my friend Campioni, a pretty little girl, between twelve and thirteen, as I should imagine, came into my room with mingled boldness and fear and made me a low bow. I asked her what she wanted and she replied in Latin verse to the effect that her mother was in the next room and that, if I was willing, she would come in. I replied in Latin prose that I did not care about seeing her mother, telling her my reasons with great plainness. She replied with four Latin lines, but, as they were not to

the point, I could see that she had learnt them by heart and repeated them like a parrot. She went on, still in Latin verse, to tell me that her mother must come in or else the authorities might think I was abusing her.

This last phrase was uttered with all the directness of the Latin style. It made me burst out laughing and I felt inclined to explain to her what she had said in her own language. The little slut told me she was a Venetian and, this putting me at my ease, I told her that the authorities would never suspect her of doing such a thing, as she was too young. At this, the girl seemed to reflect a moment and then recited some verses from the *Priapeia* to the effect that unripe fruit is often more piquant than that which is ripe. This was enough to set me on fire and Campioni, seeing that he was not wanted, went back to his room.

I drew her gently to me and asked if her father was in Vienna. She said "yes" and, instead of repulsing my caresses, proceeded to accompany my actions with the recital of erotic verses. I sent her away with a fee of two ducats but, before she went, she gave me her address written in German with four Latin verses beneath, stating that her bedfellow would find her either Hebe or Ganymede, according to his liking.

In spite of her perversity, I could not help admiring the ingenuity of her father, who thus contrived to make a living out of his daughter. She was pretty enough, but in Vienna pretty girls are so common that they often have to starve, in spite of their charms. The Latin verses had been thrown in as a special attraction in this case, but I did not think he would find it very remunerative in Vienna.

Next evening my evil genius made me go and seek her out at the address she had given me. Although I was forty-two years old, in spite of my wide experience, I was so foolish as to go alone. The girl saw me coming from the window and, guessing that I was looking for her, she came down and showed me in. I went in, went upstairs and, when I found myself in the presence of the wretch Pocchini, my blood froze in my veins. A feeling of false shame prevented my retracing my steps, as it might have looked as if I were afraid. In the same room were his pretended wife, Catina, two Slavonic-looking assassins and the decoy duck. I saw that this was not a laughing matter, so I dissembled to the best of my ability and made up my mind to leave the place in five minutes' time.

Pocchini, swearing and blaspheming, began to reproach me with the manner in which I had treated him in England, and said that his time had come and that my life was in his hands. One of the two Slavs broke in and said we must make friends and so made me sit down, opened a bottle and said we must drink together. I tried to put as good a face on it as I could, but I begged to be excused, whereupon Pocchini swore that I was afraid of having to pay for the bottle of wine.

"You are mistaken," said I. "I am quite ready to pay."

I put my hand in my pocket to take out a ducat without drawing out my purse, but the Slav told me I need not be afraid, as I was amongst honest people. Again shame made me yield and, as I had some difficulty in extracting my purse, the Slav kindly did it for me. Pocchini immediately snatched it from his hands and said he would keep it as part compensation for all I had made him endure. I saw that it was a concerted scheme and said with a smile that he could do as he liked, and so I rose to leave them. The Slav said we must embrace and, on my declaring that to be unnecessary, he and his comrade drew their sabres and I thought myself undone. Without more ado, I hastened to embrace them. To my astonishment, they let me go and I went home in a grievous state and, not knowing what else to do, went to bed.

CHAPTER 122

THE greatest mistake that a man who punishes a knave can commit is to leave the rogue alive, for he is certain to take vengeance. If I had had my sword in that den of thieves, I would no doubt have defended myself, but it would have gone ill with me, three against one, and I should probably have been cut to pieces, while the murderers would have escaped unpunished.

At eight o'clock Campioni came to see me in my bed and was astonished at my adventure. Without troubling himself to commiserate me, we both began to think how we could get back my purse; but we came to the conclusion that it would be impossible, as I had nothing more than my mere assertion to prove the case. In spite of that, however, I wrote out the whole story, beginning with the girl who recited the Latin verses. I intended to place the document before the police; however, I had not time to do so.

I was just sitting down to dinner when an agent of the police came and gave me an order to go and talk with Count Schrotombach, the *Statthalter*. I told him to instruct my coachman, who was waiting at the door, and that I would present myself shortly at the place designated.

When I called on the *Statthalter*, I found him to be a thickset individual; he was standing up and surrounded by men who seemed ready to execute his orders. When he saw me, he pointed to a watch and requested me to note the hour.

"I see it."

"If you are in Vienna at that time to-morrow, I shall have you expelled from the city."

"Why do you give me such an unjust order?"

"In the first place, I am not here to give you accounts or reasons for my actions. However, I may tell you that you are expelled for playing games of chance, which are forbidden by the laws under pain of the galleys. Do you recognise that purse and these cards?"

I did not know the cards but I knew the purse, which had been

stolen from me. I was in a terrible rage and replied only by presenting the magistrate with the truthful narrative of what had happened to me. He read it and then said with a laugh that I was well known to be a man of parts, that my character was known, that I had been expelled from Warsaw and that, as for the document before him, he judged it to be a pack of lies, since in his opinion it was altogether void of probability.

"In fine," he added, "you will obey my order to leave the town and you must tell me where you are going."

"I will tell you that when I have made up my mind to go."

"What? You dare tell me you will not obey?"

"You yourself have said that, if I do not go, I shall be removed by force."

"Very well. I have heard you have a strong will, but here it will be of no use to you. I advise you to go quietly and so avoid harsh measures."

"I request you to return me that document."

"I will not do so. Begone!"

That was one of the most terrible moments of my life. I still shudder when I think of it. It was only a cowardly love of life that hindered me from running my sword through the body of the *Statthalter*, who had treated me as if he were a hangman and not a judge.

As I went away, I took it into my head to complain to Prince Kaunitz, though I had not the honour of knowing him. I called at his house and a man I met told me to stay in the ante-chamber, as the prince would pass through to go to dinner.

It was five o'clock. The prince appeared, followed by his guests, amongst whom was M. Polo Renieri, the Venetian ambassador. The prince asked me what he could do for me and I told my story in a loud voice before them all.

"I have received my order to go, but I shall not obey. I implore Your Highness to give me your protection and help me bring my plea to the foot of the throne."

"Write out your petition," he replied, "and I will see that the Empress gets it. But I advise you to ask Her Majesty for a respite, for, if you say you won't obey, she will be predisposed against you."

"But, if the royal grace does not place me in security, I shall be driven away by violence."

"Then take refuge with the ambassador of your native country."

"Alas, my lord, my country has forsaken me. An act of legal, though unconstitutional, violence has deprived me of my rights as a citizen. My name is Casanova and my country is Venice."

The prince looked astonished and turned to the Venetian ambassador, who smiled and whispered to him for ten minutes.

"It's a pity," said the prince, kindly, "that you cannot claim the protection of any ambassador."

At these words, a nobleman of colossal stature stepped forward and said I could claim his protection, as my whole family, myself

included, had served the prince, his master. He spoke the truth, for he was the ambassador of Saxony.

"That is Count Vitzthum," said the prince. "Write to the Empress and I will forward your petition immediately. If there is any delay in the answer, go to the count; you will be safe with him until you wish to leave Vienna."

In the meanwhile the prince ordered writing materials to be brought me and he and his guests passed into the dining-hall.

I give here a copy of the petition, which I composed in less than ten minutes. I made a fair copy for the Venetian ambassador to send home to the Senate:

"Madame,—I am sure that if, as Your Royal and Imperial Highness was walking in your garden, an insect appealed plaintively to you not to crush it, you would turn aside and so avoid doing the poor creature any hurt.

I, madame, am an insect and beg of you that you will order M. *Statt-halter* Schrotombach to delay crushing me with Your Majesty's slipper for a week. Possibly, after that time has elapsed, Your Majesty will not only prevent his crushing me, but will deprive him of that slipper, which was meant to be the terror only of rogues, and not of a humble Venetian, who is an honest man, though he escaped from The Leads.

In profound submission to Your Majesty's will,

I remain,

Casanova.

Given at Vienna, January 21st, 1767."

When I had finished the petition, I made a fair draft of it and sent it in to the prince, who sent it back to me, telling me he would place it in the Empress's hands immediately but would be much obliged by my making a copy for his own use.

I did so and gave both copies to the *valet de chambre* and went my way. I trembled like a paralytic and was afraid my anger might get me into difficulty. By way of calming myself, I wrote out in the style of a manifesto the narrative I had given to the vile Schrotombach and which that unworthy magistrate had refused to return me.

At seven o'clock Count Vitzthum came into my room. He greeted me in a friendly manner and begged me to tell him the story of the girl I had gone to see on the promise of the Latin quatrain referring to her accommodating disposition. I gave him the address and copied out the verses and he said that was enough to convince an enlightened judge that I had been slandered, but nevertheless he was very doubtful whether justice would be done me.

"What! shall I be obliged to leave Vienna to-morrow?"

"No, no; the Empress cannot possibly refuse you the week's delay."

"Why not?"

"Oh! no one could refuse such an appeal as that. Even the prince could not help smiling as he was reading it in his cold way. After reading it, he passed it on to me and then to the Venetian ambassador,

who asked him if he meant to give it to the Empress as it stood. 'This petition,' replied the prince, 'might be sent to God, if one knew the way.' And forthwith he ordered one of his secretaries to fold it up and see that it was delivered. We talked of you for the rest of dinner and I had the pleasure of hearing the Venetian ambassador say that no one could discover any reason for your imprisonment under The Leads. Your duel was also discussed, but on that point we knew only what has appeared in the newspapers. Oblige me by giving me a copy of your petition; that phrase of Schrotembach and the slipper pleased me vastly."

I copied out the document and gave it to him with a copy of my manifesto. Before he left me, the count renewed the invitation to take refuge with him if I did not hear from the Empress before the expiration of the twenty-four hours.

At ten o'clock I had a visit from the Comte de la Pérouse, the Marquis de la Casas and Signor Uccelli, the secretary of the Venetian embassy. The latter came to ask for a copy of my petition for his chief. I promised he should have it and I also sent a copy of my manifesto. The only thing which rather interfered with the dignity of this latter piece and gave it a somewhat comic air were the four Latin verses, which might make people imagine that, after enjoying the girl as Hebe, I had gone in search of her as Ganymede. This was not the case, but the Empress understood Latin and was familiar with mythology and, if she had looked on it in the light I have mentioned, I should have been undone.

I made six copies of the two documents before I went to bed; I was quite tired out, but the exertion had somewhat soothed me. At noon the next day young Hasse (son of the chapel-master and the famous Faustina), secretary of legation to Count Vitzthum, came to tell me from the ambassador that nobody would attack me in my own house or in my carriage if I went out, but that it would be imprudent to go out on foot. He added that his chief would have the pleasure of calling on me at seven o'clock. I begged M. Hasse to let me have all this in writing and, after he had written it out, he left me. Thus the order to leave Vienna had been suspended; it must have been done by the sovereign.

"I have no time to lose," said I to myself. "I shall have justice done me, my assassins will be condemned, my purse will be returned with the two hundred ducats in it and not in the condition in which it was shown to me by the infamous Schrotembach, who will be punished by dismissal at least."

Such were my "castles in Spain"; who has not built such? *Quod nimis miseri volunt, hoc facile credunt*, says Seneca. The wish is father to the thought.

Before sending my manifesto to the Empress, to Prince Kaunitz and to all the ambassadors, I thought it would be well to call on the Countess of Salmor, who spoke to the sovereign early and late. I had taken a letter of introduction to her. She greeted me by saying I had

better give up wearing my arm in a sling, as it looked as if I were a charlatan; my arm must be well enough after nine months. I was extremely astonished by this greeting and replied that, if it were not necessary, I would not wear a sling and that I was no charlatan.

"However," I added, "I have come to see you on a different matter."

"Yes, I know, but I will have nothing to do with it. You are all as bad as Tomatis."

I turned abruptly and left the room without taking any further notice of her. I returned home, feeling overwhelmed by the situation. I had been robbed and insulted by a band of thorough-paced rascals; I could do nothing, justice was denied me and now I had been made a mock of by a worthless countess. If I had received such an insult from a man, I would soon have made him feel the weight of one arm at all events. I could not bear my arm without a sling for an hour; pain and swelling set in immediately. I was not perfectly cured until twenty months after the duel.

Count Vitzthum came to see me at seven o'clock. He said the Empress had told Prince Kaunitz that Schrotombach considered my narrative pure romance. His theory was that I had held a bank at faro with sharpers' cards and had dealt with both hands, the arm in a sling being a mere pretence; I had then been caught in the act by one of the gamesters and my unjust gains had been very properly taken from me; my detector had then handed over my purse, containing forty ducats, to the police and the money had, of course, been confiscated. The Empress had to choose between believing Schrotombach and dismissing him and she was not inclined to do the latter, as it would be a difficult matter to find a successor for the difficult and odious task of keeping Vienna clear of human vermin.

"That is what Prince Kaunitz asked me to tell you. But you need not be afraid of any violence and you can go when you like."

"Then I am to be robbed of two hundred ducats with impunity. The Empress might at least reimburse me, if she does nothing more. Please to ask the prince whether I can ask the sovereign to give me that satisfaction—the least I can demand."

"I will tell him what you say."

"If not, I shall leave; for what can I do in a town where I can only drive and where the government keeps assassins in its pay?"

"You are right. We are all sure that Pocchini has calumniated you. The girl who recites Latin verses is well known, but none knew her address. I must advise you not to publish your tale as long as you are in Vienna, as it places Schrotombach in a very bad light and you see the Empress has to support him in the exercise of his authority."

"I see the force of your argument and I shall have to devour my anger. I will leave Vienna as soon as the washer-woman sends home my linen, but I will have the story printed in all its black injustice."

"The Empress is prejudiced against you, I don't know by whom."

"I know, though; it is that infernal old hag, Countess de Salmor."

The next day I received a letter from Count Vitzthum in which he

said that Prince Kaunitz advised me to forget the two hundred ducats, that the girl and her so-called mother had to all appearance left Vienna, as someone had gone to the address and had failed to find her.

I saw I could do nothing and resolved to depart in peace and afterwards publish the whole story and hang Pocchini with my own hands when next I met him. I did neither the one nor the other.

About that time a young lady of the Salis de Coire family arrived at Vienna without any companion. The imperial hangman, Schroteimbach, ordered her to leave Vienna in two days. She replied that she would leave exactly when she felt inclined. The magistrate consigned her to imprisonment in a convent and she was still there when I left. The Emperor went to see her and the Empress, his mother, asked him what he thought of her. His answer was, "I thought her much more intelligent than Schroteimbach."

Undoubtedly every man worthy of the name longs to be free, but who is really free in this world? No one. The philosopher, perchance, may be accounted so, but it is at the cost of too precious sacrifices at the phantom shrine of Liberty.

I left the use of my suite of rooms, for which I had paid a month in advance, to Campioni, promising to wait for him in Augsburg, where the law alone is supreme. I departed alone, carrying with me the bitter regret that I had not been able to kill the monster whose despotism had crushed me. I stopped at Linz on purpose to write to Schroteimbach a letter even more bitter than that which I had written to the Duke of Wurtemberg in 1760. I posted it myself and had it registered, so as to be sure of its reaching the scoundrel to whom it was addressed. It was absolutely necessary for me to write this letter, for rage that has no vent must kill at last. From Linz I had a three days' journey to Munich, where I called on Count Gaetan Zavoiski, who died in Dresden seven years ago. I had known him in Venice, when he was in want, and had happily been useful to him. On my relating the story of the robbery that had been committed on me, he no doubt imagined I was in want and gave me twenty-five louis. To tell the truth, it was much less than what I had given him in Venice and, if he had looked upon his action as paying back a debt, we should not have been quits but, as I had never wished him to think that I had lent, not given, him money, I received the present gratefully. He gave me also a letter for Count Maximilian de Lamberg, marshal at the court of the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg, whose acquaintance I had the honour of having.

There was no theatre then in Augsburg, but there were masked balls, in which all classes mingled freely. There were also small parties where faro was played for limited stakes. I was tired of the pleasure, the misfortune and the griefs I had had in three capitals and resolved to spend four months in the free city of Augsburg, where strangers have the same privileges as the canons. My purse was slender but, with the economical life I was leading, I had nothing to fear on that score. I was not far from Venice, where a hundred ducats were always at my service

if I wanted them. I played a little and waged war against the sharpers, who have become more numerous of late than the dupes, as there are also more doctors than patients. I also thought of getting a mistress, for what is life without love? I had tried in vain to trace Gertrude, the engraver was dead and no one knew what had become of his daughter.

Two or three days before the end of the carnival I went to a hirer of carriages, as I had to go to a ball at some distance from the town. While the horses were being put in, I entered the room to warm my hands, for the weather was very cold. A girl came up and asked if I would drink a glass of wine.

"No," said I. And, on the question being repeated, I repeated the monosyllable somewhat rudely. The girl stood still and began to laugh and I was about to turn angrily away when she said, "I see you do not remember me?"

I looked at her attentively and at last I discovered, beneath her unusually ugly features, the lineaments of Anna Midel, the maid in the engraver's house.

"You remind me of Anna Midel," said I.

"Alas, I was Anna Midel once. I am no longer an object fit for love, but that is your fault."

"Mine?"

"Yes; the four hundred florins you gave me made Count Fugger's coachman marry me and he not only abandoned me but gave me a disgusting disease, which was like to have been my death. I recovered my health but never shall regain my good looks."

"I am very sorry to hear all this; but tell me what has become of Gertrude."

"Then you don't know that you are going to a ball at her house to-night?"

"Her house?"

"Yes. After her father's death, she married a well-to-do and respectable man and I expect you will be pleased with the entertainment."

"Is she pretty still?"

"She is just as she used to be, except that she is six years older and has had children."

"Is she gallant?"

"I don't think so."

Anna had spoken the truth. Gertrude was pleased to see me and introduced me to her husband as one of her father's old lodgers and I had altogether a pleasant welcome, but, on sounding her, I found she entertained those virtuous sentiments which might have been expected under the circumstances.

Campioni arrived at Augsburg at the beginning of Lent. He was in company with Binetti, who was going to Paris, having completely despoiled his wife and left her forever. Campioni told me that no one in Vienna doubted my story in the slightest degree. Pocchini and the Sclav had disappeared a few days after my departure and the *Statthalter*

had incurred a great deal of odium by his treatment of me. Campioni spent a month with me and then went on to London.

I called on Count Lamberg and his countess, who, without being beautiful, was an epitome of feminine charm and amiability. Her name before marriage was Countess Dachsberg. Three months after my arrival this lady, who was *enceinte* but did not think her time was due, went with Count Fugger, dean of the chapter, to a party of pleasure at the inn, three-quarters of a league from Augsburg. I was present and in the course of the meal she was taken with such violent pains that she feared she would be delivered on the spot. She did not like to tell the noble canon and, thinking I was more likely to be acquainted with such emergencies, she came up to me and told me all. I ordered the coachman to put in his horses instantly and, when the coach was ready, I took up the countess and carried her to it. The canon followed us in blank astonishment and asked me what was the matter. I told him to bid the coachman drive fast and not to spare the horses. He did so but asked again what was the matter.

"The countess will be delivered of a child if we do not make haste."

I thought I would be bound to laugh, in spite of my sympathies for the poor lady's pains, when I saw the dean turn green and white and purple and look as if he were going into a fit, as he realised that the countess might be delivered before his eyes in his own carriage. The poor man looked as grievously tormented as St. Laurence on his grid-iron. The bishop was at Plombières; they would write and tell him! It would be in all the papers! "Quick! coachman, quick!"

We got to the castle before it was too late. I carried the lady into her room and they ran for a surgeon and a midwife. It was no good, however, for in five minutes the count came out and said the countess had just been happily delivered. The dean looked as if a weight had been taken off his mind; however, he took the precaution of having himself blooded.

I spent an extremely pleasant four months in Augsburg, supping twice or thrice a week at Count Lamberg's. At these suppers I made the acquaintance of a very remarkable man, Count Thurn and Valsamina, then a page in the prince-bishop's household, now Dean of Ratisbon. He was always at the count's, as was also Dr. Algardi, of Bologna, the prince's physician and a delightful man.

I often saw at the same house a certain Baron Sellenthin, a Prussian officer who was recruiting agent for his master at Augsburg. He was a pleasant man, somewhat in the Gascon style, soft-spoken and an expert gamester. Five or six years ago I received a letter from him dated from Dresden, in which he said that, though he was old and had married a rich wife, he repented of having married at all. I should say the same if I had ever chanced to marry.

During my stay in Augsburg several Poles, who had left their country on account of the troubles, came to see me. Amongst others was Rzewuski, the royal prothonotary, whom I had known in St. Petersburg as the lover of poor Madame d'Anglade.

"What a Diet! What plots! What counter-plots! What misfortunes!" said this honest Pole to me. "Happy are they who have nothing to do with it!"

He was going to Spa and assured me that, if I followed him, I would meet Prince Adam's sister, Tomatis and Madame Catai, who had become the manager's wife. I determined to go to Spa and take measures so that I might go there with three or four hundred ducats in my purse. To this intent I wrote to Prince Charles of Courland, who was in Venice, to send me a hundred ducats and in my letter I gave him an infallible receipt for the "philosopher's stone." The letter containing this vast secret was not in cypher, so I advised him to burn it after he had read it, assuring him that I possessed a copy. He did not do so and it was taken to Paris with his other papers when he was sent to the Bastille.

If it had not been for the Revolution, my letter would never have seen the light. When the Bastille was destroyed, my letter was found and printed, with other curious compositions, which were afterwards translated into German and English. The ignorant fools that abound in the land where my fate wills that I should write down the chief events of my long and troublous life—these fools, I say, who are naturally my sworn foes (for the ass lies not down with the horse), made this letter an article of accusation against me and thought they could stop my mouth by telling me that the letter had been translated into German and would remain to my eternal shame. The ignorant Bohemians were astonished when I answered them that I regarded the letter as redounding to my glory and that, if their ears were not quite so long, their blame would be turned into praise.

I do not know whether my letter has been correctly translated but, since it has become public property, I shall set it down here in homage to truth, the only god I adore. I have before me an exact copy of the original, written in Augsburg in the year 1767, and we are now in the year 1798.

It runs as follows:

"My Lord,—I hope Your Highness will either burn this letter after reading it or else preserve it with the greatest care. It will be better, however, to make a copy in cypher and burn the original. My attachment to you is not my only motive in writing; I confess my own interests are equally concerned. Allow me to say that I do not wish Your Highness to esteem me alone for any qualities you may have observed in me; I wish you to become my debtor by the inestimable secret I am going to confide to you. This secret relates to the making of gold, the only thing of which Your Highness stands in need. If you had been miserly by nature, you would be rich now, but you are generous and will be poor all your days if you do not make use of my secret.

"Your Highness told me at Riga that you would like me to give you the secret by which I transmuted iron into copper; I never did so, but now I shall teach you how to make a much more marvellous transmutation. I should point out to you, however, that you are not at

present in a suitable place for the operation, although all the materials are easily procurable. The operation necessitates my presence for the construction of a furnace and for the great care necessary, as the least mistake will spoil all. The transmutation of Mars is an easy and merely mechanical process, but that of gold is philosophical in the highest degree. The gold produced will be equal to that used in the Venetian sequins. You must reflect, my lord, that I am giving you information which will permit you to dispense with me, and you must also reflect that I am confiding to you my life and my liberty.

"The step I am taking should insure your lifelong protection and should raise you above that prejudice which is entertained against the general mass of alchemists. My vanity would be wounded if you refused to distinguish me from the common herd of operators. All I ask is that you will wait till we meet before undertaking the process. You cannot do it by yourself and, if you employ any other person but myself, you will betray the secret. I must tell you that, using the same materials and by the addition of mercury and nitre, I made the tree of projection for the Marchioness d'Urfé, and the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst calculated the profit as fifty per cent. My fortune would have been made long ago if I had found a prince with the control of a mint and whom I could trust. Your character enables me to confide in you. However, we will come to the point

"You must take four ounces of good silver; dissolve in *aqua fortis*; precipitate *secundum artem* with copper; then wash in lukewarm water to separate the acids; dry, mix with half an ounce of *sal ammoniac* and place in a suitable vessel. Afterwards you must take a pound of alum, a pound of Hungary crystals, four ounces of verdigris, four ounces of cinnabar and two ounces of sulphur. Pulverise and mix and place in a retort of such size that the above substances will only half fill it. This retort must be placed over a furnace with four draughts, for the heat must be raised to the fourth degree. At first your fire must be slow, so as to extract the gross phlegm of the matter and, when the spirit begins to appear, place the receiver under the retort and Luna, with the ammoniac salts, will appear in it. All the joinings must be luted with the Philosophical Luting and, as the spirit comes, so regulate your furnace but do not let it pass the third degree of heat.

"As soon as the sublimation begins, then boldly open your fourth vent but take heed that that which is sublimed pass not into the receiver where is your Luna and so you must shut the mouth of the retort closely and keep it thus for twenty-four hours and then take off your fastenings and allow the distillation to go on. Then you must increase your fire, so that the spirits may pass over, until the matter in the retort is quite desiccated. After this operation has been performed three times, then you will see the gold appear in the retort. Then draw it forth and melt it, adding your *corpus perfectum*. Melt it with two ounces of gold, then lay it in water and you will find four ounces of pure gold.

"Such, my lord, is the gold mine for your mint of Mitau, by which, with the assistance of a manager and four men, you can assure your-

self a revenue of a thousand ducats a week, and double and quadruple that sum if Your Highness chooses to increase the men and the furnaces I ask Your Highness to make me your manager. But remember, it must be a State secret, so burn this letter and, if Your Highness would give me any reward in advance, I ask you only to give me your affection and esteem. I shall be happy if I have reason to believe that my master will also be my friend. My life, which this letter places in your power, is ever at your service and I know not what I shall do if I ever have cause to repent having disclosed my secret. I have the honour to be, etc."

Into whatever language this letter may have been translated, if its sense run not as above, it is not my letter and I am ready to give the lie to all the Mirabeaus in the world. I have been called an exile, but wrongfully, for a man who has to leave a country by virtue of a *lettre de cachet* is no exile. He is forced to obey a despotic monarch who looks upon his kingdom as his house and turns out of doors anyone who meets with his displeasure.

As soon as my purse had swelled to a respectable size, I left Augsburg. The date of my departure was June fourteenth, 1767. I was at Ulm when a courier of the Duke of Wurtemberg passed through the town with the news that His Highness would arrive from Venice in the course of five or six days. This courier had a letter for me. It had been entrusted to him by Prince Charles of Courland, who had told the courier that he would find me at the Hôtel du Raisin in Augsburg. As it happened, I had left the day before but, knowing the way by which I had gone, the courier caught me up at Ulm. He gave me the letter and asked if I were the same Casanova who had been placed under arrest on account of some gambling dispute with three officers and had escaped. As I was never an adept at concealing the truth, I replied in the affirmative. A Wurtemberg officer who was standing beside us observed to me in a friendly manner that he was at Stuttgart at the time and that most people concurred in blaming the three officers for their conduct in the matter.

Without making any reply, I read the letter, which referred to our private affairs, but, as I was reading it, I resolved to tell a little lie, one of those lies which do nobody any harm.

"Well, sir," I said to the officer, "His Highness, your sovereign, has listened to reason at last and this letter informs me of a reparation which is in every way satisfactory. The duke has created me his private secretary, with a salary of twelve hundred crowns a year. But I have waited for it a long time. God knows what has become of the three officers!"

"They are all at Louisburg and X— is now a colonel."

"Well, they will be surprised to hear my news and they will hear it to-morrow, for I am leaving this place in an hour. If they are at Louisburg, I shall have a triumph; but I am sorry not to be able to accompany you; however, we shall see each other the day after to-morrow."

I had an excellent night and awoke with the beautiful idea of going to Louisburg, not to fight the three officers but to frighten them, triumph over them and enjoy a pleasant vengeance for the injury they had done me. I would at the same time see a good many old friends; there was Madame Toscani (the duke's mistress), Baletti and Vestris, who had married a former mistress of the duke's. I had sounded the depths of the human heart and knew I had nothing to fear. The duke was on the point of returning and nobody would dream of impugning the truth of my story. When he actually did arrive, he would not find me, for, as soon as the courier announced his approach, I would go away, telling everybody I had orders to precede His Highness, and everybody would be duped.

I never had a more fascinating idea. I was quite proud of it and would have despised myself if I had failed to carry it into effect. It would be my vengeance on the duke, who could not have forgotten the terrible letter I had written him, for princes do not forget small injuries as they do great services.

I slept badly the following night, my anxiety was so great, and I reached Louisburg and gave my name at the town gates, without the addition of my pretended office, for my jest must be matured by degrees. I went to stay at the posting-inn and, just as I was asking for the address of Madame Toscani, she and her husband appeared on the scene. They both flung their arms around my neck and overwhelmed me with compliments on my wounded arm and the victory I had achieved.

"What victory?"

"Your appearance here has filled the hearts of all your friends with joy."

"Well, I certainly am in the duke's service, but how did you find it out?"

"It's the common talk. The courier who gave you the letter has spread it all abroad and the officer who was present and arrived here yesterday morning confirmed it. But you cannot imagine the consternation of your three foes. However, we are afraid that you will have some trouble with them, as they have kept your letter of defiance issued at Fürstenberg."

"Why didn't they meet me, then?"

"Two of them could not go and the third arrived too late."

"Very good. If the duke has no objection, I shall be happy to meet them one after another, not all three at once. Of course, the duel must be with pistols; a sword duel is out of the question, with my arm in a sling."

"We will speak of that again. My daughter wants to make peace before the duke comes, and you had better consent to some compromise, for there are three of them and it isn't likely you could kill all three, one after the other."

"Your daughter must have grown into a beauty."

"You must sup with us this evening; you will see her, for she is no longer the duke's mistress. She is going to be married."

"If your daughter can bring about a compromise I will gladly fall in with it, provided it is an honourable one for me."

"How is it that you are wearing the sling after all these months?"

"I am quite cured and yet my arm swells as soon as I let it swing loose. You shall see it after dinner—for you must dine with me if you want me to sup with you."

Next came Vestris, whom I did not know, accompanied by my beloved Baletti. With them was an officer, who was in love with Madame Toscani's second daughter, and another of their circle, with whom I was also unacquainted. They all came to congratulate me on my honourable position in the duke's service. Baletti was quite overcome with delight. The reader will recollect that he was my chief assistant in my escape from Stuttgart and that I was once going to marry his sister. Baletti was a fine fellow and the duke was very fond of him. He had a little country house with a spare room, which he begged me to accept, as he said he was only too proud that the duke should know him as my best friend. When His Highness came, of course I would have an apartment in the palace. I accepted and, as it was still early, we all went to see the young Toscani. I had loved her in Paris before her beauty had reached its zenith, and she was naturally proud to show me how beautiful she had become. She showed me her house and her jewels, told me the story of her amours with the duke, of her breaking with him on account of his perpetual infidelities and of her coming marriage to a man she despised but was forced to accept because of her position.

At dinner-time we all went to the inn, where we met the offending colonel; he was the first to take off his hat, we returned the salute and he passed on his way.

The dinner was a pleasant one and, when it was over, I proceeded to take up my quarters with Baletti. In the evening we went to Madame Toscani's, where I saw two girls of ravishing beauty, Madame Toscani's daughter and Vestris' wife, by whom the duke had had two children. Madame Vestris was a handsome woman, but her wit and the charm of her manner enchanted me still more. She had only one fault—she pronounced her *r*'s badly.

There was a certain reserve about the manner of Mlle. Toscani, so I addressed myself chiefly to Madame Vestris, whose husband was not jealous, for neither did he care for her nor she for him. On the day of my arrival the manager had distributed the parts of a little play which was to be given in honour of the duke's arrival. It had been written by a local author, in the hope of its obtaining the favour of the Court for him.

After supper the little piece was discussed. Madame Vestris played the principal part, which she was prevailed upon to recite.

"Your elocution is admirable and your expression full of spirit," I observed. "But what a pity that you do not pronounce the letter *r* correctly!"

The whole table scouted my opinion.

"It's a charming quality, not a defect," said they. "It makes her acting soft and delicate; other actresses envy her the prestige of what you call a defect."

I made no answer but looked at Madame Vestris.

"Do you think I am taken in by all that?" said she.

"I think you are much too sensible to believe such nonsense."

"I prefer a man to say honestly 'What a pity!' rather than hear all that foolish flattery. But I am sorry to say there is no remedy for the defect."

"No remedy?"

"No."

"Pardon me, I have an infallible remedy for your complaint. You shall give me a hearty blow if I do not make you read the part perfectly by to-morrow but, if I succeed in making you read it as your husband, for example, might read it, you shall permit me to give you a tender embrace."

"Very well; but what must I do?"

"You must let me weave a spell over your part; that is all. Give it to me. To-morrow morning at nine o'clock, I will bring it to you to get my blow or my kiss, if your husband has no objection."

"None whatever; but we do not believe in spells."

"You are right in a general way; but mine will not fail."

"Very well."

Madame Vestris left me the part and the conversation turned on other subjects. I was condoled with over my swollen hand and I told the story of my duel. Everybody seemed to delight in entertaining me and feasting me and I went back to Baletti's in love with all the ladies, but especially with Madame Vestris and Mlle. Toscani.

Baletti had a beautiful little girl, three years old.

"How did you get that angel?" I asked.

"There's her mother; and, as a proof of my hospitality, she shall sleep with you to-night."

She was his housekeeper and ravishingly beautiful.

"I accept your generous offer; but let it be to-morrow night."

"And why not to-night?"

"Because I shall be engaged all night in weaving my spell."

"What do you mean? I thought that was a joke."

"No, I am quite serious."

"Are you a little crazy?"

"You shall see. Just go to bed and leave me a light and writing materials."

I spent six hours in copying the part out, altering only certain phrases. For every word in which the letter *r* appeared, I substituted another. It was a tiresome task, but I longed to embrace Madame Vestris before her husband. I set about my task in the following manner:

The text ran, "*Les procédés de cet homme m'outragent et me désespèrent; je dois penser à m'en débarrasser.*" For this I substituted, "*Cet*

homme a des façons qui m'offensent et me désolent; il faut que je m'en défasse." "Il me croit éprise de lui" became "Il pense que je l'aime."

When I had finished, I slept for three hours and then rose and dressed. Baletti saw my "spell" and said I had earned the curses of the young author, as Madame Vestris would no doubt make him write all parts for her without using the letter *r*; and, indeed, that was just what she did.

I called on the actress and found her getting up. I gave her the part and, as soon as she saw what I had done, she burst into exclamations of delight and, calling her husband, showed him my contrivance and said she would never play a part with an *r* in it again. I promised to copy all her parts out and added that I had spent the whole night amending the present one.

"The whole night! Come and take your reward, for you are cleverer than any sorcerer. We must have the author to dinner and I shall make him promise to write all my parts without the *r*, or the duke will not employ him. Indeed, I don't wonder the duke made you his secretary! I never thought it would be possible to do what you have done; but I suppose it was very difficult?"

"Not at all. If I were a pretty woman with the like defect, I would take care to avoid all words with an *r* in them."

"Oh, that would be too much trouble."

"Let us bet again, for a box or a kiss, that you can spend a whole day without using an *r*. Let us begin now."

"I'm willing," said she, "but we won't have any stake, as I think you are too greedy."

The author came to dinner and was duly attacked by Madame Vestris. She began by saying that it was an author's duty to be polite to actresses and, if any of them spoke with a lisp, the least he could do was to write their parts without the fatal letter.

The young author laughed and said it could not be done without spoiling the style. Thereupon Madame Vestris gave him my version of her part, telling him to read it and say on his conscience whether the style had suffered. He had to confess that my alterations were positive improvements, due to the great richness of the French language. And he was right, for there is no language in the world that can compare in copiousness of expression with the French.

This trifling subject kept us merry, but Madame Vestris expressed a devout wish that all authors would do for her what I had done. In Paris, where I heard her playing well and lisping terribly, she did not find the authors so obliging, but she pleased the people. She asked me if I would undertake to recompose *Zaire*, leaving out the *r*'s.

"Ah!" said I, "considering that it would have to be in verse, and in Voltairean verse, I would rather not undertake the task."

With a view to pleasing the actress, the young author asked me how I would tell her that she was charming, without using an *r*.

"I should say that she enchants me, puts me in ecstasy, that she is unique."

She wrote me a letter, which I still keep, in which the *r* does not appear. If I could have stayed at Stuttgart, this device of mine might have won me her favours, but after a week of this feasting and triumph the courier came one morning at ten o'clock and announced that His Highness the duke would arrive at four.

As soon as I heard the news, I told Baletti with the utmost coolness that I thought it would be only polite to meet my lord and swell his train on his entry into Louisburg and, as I wished to meet him at a distance of two stages, I should have to go at once. He thought my idea an excellent one and went to order post-horses immediately but, when he saw me packing all my belongings into my trunk, he guessed the truth and applauded the jest. I embraced him and confessed my hardihood. He was sorry to lose me but laughed when he thought of the feelings of the duke and the three officers when they found out the trick. He promised to write to me at Mannheim, where I had decided on spending a week to see my beloved Algardi, who was in the service of the Elector. I had also letters for M. de Sickingen and Baron Becker, one of the Elector's ministers.

When the horses were put in, I embraced Baletti, his little girl and his pretty housekeeper and ordered the postillion to drive to Mannheim.

When we reached Mannheim, I heard that the Count was at Schwetzingen and I bade the postillion drive on. I found everyone I had expected to see. Algardi had married; M. de Sickingen was soliciting the position of ambassador to Paris and Baron Becker introduced me to the Elector. Five or six days after my arrival Prince Frédéric des Deux-Ponts died and I will here relate an anecdote I heard the day before he died.

Dr. Algardi had attended the prince during his last illness. I was supping with Veraci, the poet laureate, on the eve of the prince's death and in the course of supper Algardi came in.

"How is the prince?" said I.

"Poor Prince! He cannot possibly live more than twenty-four hours."

"Does he know it?"

"No, he still hopes. He grieved me to the heart by bidding me tell him the whole truth; he even bade me give my word of honour that I was speaking the truth. Then he asked if he were positively in danger of death."

"And you told him the truth?"

"Certainly not. I told him his sickness was undoubtedly a mortal one but that, with the help of nature and art, wonders might be worked."

"Then you deceived him and told a lie?"

"I did not deceive him; his recovery comes under the category of the possible. I did not want to leave him in despair, for despair would most certainly kill him."

"Yes, yes; but you will confess that you told him a lie and broke your word of honour."

"I told no lie, for I know he may possibly be cured."

"Then you lied just now?"

"Not at all, for he will die to-morrow."

"It seems to me your reasoning is a little Jesuitical."

"No, it is not. My duty was to prolong my patient's life and spare him information which would most certainly have shortened it, possibly by several hours; besides, it is not an absolute impossibility that he recover, therefore I did not lie when I told him he might, nor did I lie just now when I gave it as my opinion (the result of experience) that he will die to-morrow; I would certainly wager a million to one that he will, but I would not wager my life."

"You are right and yet, for all that, you deceived the poor man, for his intention in asking you the question was not to be told a commonplace which he knew as well as you, but to learn your true opinion as to his life or death. But again, I agree with you that, as his physician, you were quite right not to shorten his few remaining hours by telling him the terrible truth."

After a fortnight I left Schwetzingen, leaving some of my belongings in care of Veraci, the poet, telling him I would call for them some day; but I never came for them and, after a lapse of thirty-one years, Veraci is still keeping them. He was one of the strangest poets I ever met. He affected eccentricity to make himself notorious and opposed the great Metastasio in everything, writing unwieldy verses, which he said gave more scope for the person who set them to music. He had gotten this extravagant notion from Jumelli.

I travelled to Mayence and thence sailed to Cologne, where I looked forward to the pleasure of meeting with the burgomaster's wife, who disliked General Kettler and had treated me so well seven years before; but that was not the only reason which impelled me to visit that odious town. When I was in Dresden, I had read in a number of the *Cologne Gazette* that "Master Casanova has returned to Warsaw, only to be sent about his business again. The King has heard some stories of this famous adventurer, which compel him to forbid him his Court."

I could not stomach language of this kind and I resolved to pay Jacquet, the editor, a visit and now my time had come.

I made a hasty dinner and then called on the burgomaster, whom I found sitting at table with his fair Mimi. They welcomed me warmly and for two hours I told them the story of my adventures during the preceding seven years. Mimi had to go out and I was asked to dine with them the next day.

I thought she looked prettier than ever and my imagination promised me some delicious moments with her. I spent an anxious and impatient night and called on my Amphitryon at an early hour to have an opportunity of talking with his dear companion. I found her alone and began with an ardent caress, which she gently repelled, but her face froze my passion in its course.

"Time is an excellent doctor," said she, "and it has cured me of a passion which left behind it the sting of remorse."

"What! The confessional . . ."

"Should serve only as a place wherein to confess our sins of the past and to implore grace to sin no more."

"May the Lord save me from repentance and from remorse, the only source of which is a prejudice! I shall leave Cologne to-morrow."

"I do not tell you to go."

"If there is no hope, it is no place for me. May I hope?"

"Never."

She was delightful at table, but I was gloomy and distracted. At seven o'clock next day I set out and, as soon as I had passed the Aix-la-Chapelle Gate, I told the postillion to stop and wait for me. I then walked to Jacquet's, armed with a pistol and a cane, though I meant only to beat him.

The servant showed me into the room where Jacquet was working by himself. It was on the ground floor and the door was open for coolness' sake.

He heard me coming in and asked what he could do for me.

"You scoundrelly journalist," I replied, "I am the adventurer Casanova whom you slandered in your miserable sheet four months ago."

So saying, I directed my pistol at his head with my left hand and lifted my cane with my right. But the wretched scribbler fell on his knees before me with clasped hands and offered to show me the signed letter he had received from Warsaw which contained the statement he had inserted in his paper.

"Where is this letter?"

"You shall have it in a moment."

I made way for him to search but I locked and bolted the door, to prevent his escaping. The man trembled like a leaf and began to look for the letter amongst his Warsaw correspondence, which was in a disgraceful state of confusion. I showed him the date of the article in the paper, but the letter could not be found and at the end of an hour he fell again on his knees and told me to do what I would to him. I gave him a kick and told him to get up and follow me. He made no reply and followed me bareheaded, till he saw me get into my chaise and drive off, and I have no doubt he gave thanks to God for his light escape. In the evening I reached Aix-la-Chapelle, where I found Princess Lubomirska, General Roniker, several other distinguished Poles, Tomatis and his wife and many Englishmen of my acquaintance.

· CHAPTER 123

ALL my friends seemed delighted to see me and I was well pleased to find myself in such good company. People were on the point of leaving Aix for Spa. Nearly everyone went and those who stayed did so because lodgings were not to be had at Spa. Everybody assured me this was the case and many had come back after seeking in vain for a mere garret. I paid no attention to all this and told the princess

that, if she would come with me, I would find some lodging, were it only in my carriage. We accordingly set out the next day and got to Spa in good time, our company consisting of the princess, the prothonotary, Roniker and the Tomatis couple. Everyone except myself had taken rooms in advance; I alone knew not where to turn. I got out and prepared for the search but, before going along the streets, I went into a shop and bought a hat, having lost mine on the way. I explained my situation to the shopwoman, who seemed to take an interest in me and began speaking to her husband in Flemish or Walloon and finally informed me that, if it was for only a few days, she and her husband would sleep in the shop and give up their room to me. But she said she had absolutely no room whatever for my man.

"I haven't one."

"All the better. Send away your carriage."

"Where shall I send it?"

"I will see that it is housed safely."

"How much am I to pay?"

"Nothing; and, if you are not too particular, we would like you to share our meals."

"I accept your offer thankfully."

I went up a narrow staircase and found myself in a pretty little room with a small inner room, a good bed and suitable furnishings, everything perfectly neat and clean. I thought myself very lucky and asked the good people why they would not sleep in the smaller room, rather than the shop; they replied with one breath that they would be in my way, while their niece would not interfere with me.

This news about the niece was a surprise to me. The inner room had no door and was not much bigger than the bed which it contained; it was, in fact, a mere alcove, without any window.

I must note that my hostess and her husband, both of them from Liège, were perfect models of ugliness.

"It is not within the limits of possibility," I said to myself, "that the niece be uglier than they but, if they allow her to sleep thus in the same apartment with the first comer, she must be proof against all temptation."

However, I gave no sign and did not ask to see the niece, for fear of offence, and went out without opening my trunk. I told them, as I went out, that I should not be back till after supper, and gave them some money to buy wax candles and night lights.

I went to see the princess, with whom I was to sup. All the company congratulated me on my good fortune in finding a lodging. I went to the concert, to the faro bank, but only to look on, and to the other gaming saloons, and there I saw the so-called Marquis d'Aragon, who was playing piquet with an old count of the Holy Roman Empire. I was told about the duel he had had three weeks before with a Frenchman who had picked a quarrel with him; the Frenchman had been wounded in the chest and was still ill. Nevertheless, he was only waiting for his cure to be completed to have his revenge, which he had

demanding as he was taken off the field. Such is the way of the French when a duel is fought for a trifling matter. They stop at the first blood and fight the duel over and over again. In Italy, on the other hand, duels are fought to the death. Our blood turns to fire when our adversary's sword opens a vein. Thus stabbing is common in Italy and rare in France, while duels are common in France and rare in Italy.

Of all the company at Spa, I was most pleased to see the Marquis de Caraccioli, whom I had left in London. His Court had given him leave of absence, and he was spending it at Spa. He was brimful of wit and the milk of human kindness, compassionate for the weaknesses of others and devoted to youth, no matter which sex, but he knew well the virtue of moderation and used all things without abusing them. He never played, but he loved a good gamester and despised all dupes. The worthy marquis was the means of making the fortune of the so-called Marquis d'Aragon by becoming surety for his nobility and *bona fides* to a wealthy English widow of fifty, who had taken a fancy to him and brought him her fortune of sixty thousand pounds sterling. No doubt the widow was taken with the gigantic form and beautiful title of d'Aragon, for Dragon (as his name really was) was devoid of wit and manners and his legs, which I suppose he kept well covered, bore disgusting marks of the libertine life he had led. I saw the marquis some time afterwards in Marseilles and a few years later he purchased two estates near Modena. His wife died in due course and, according to English law, he inherited the whole of her property.

I returned to my lodging in good time and went to bed without seeing the niece, who was fast asleep. I was waited on by the ugly aunt, who begged me not to get a servant while I remained in her house, for, by her account, all servants were thieves.

When I awoke in the morning, the niece had gotten up and gone downstairs. I dressed to go to The Wells and warned my host and hostess that I should have the pleasure of dining with them. The room I occupied was the only place in which they could take their meals and I was astonished when they came and asked my permission to do so. The niece had gone out, so I had to put my curiosity aside. When I was out, my acquaintances pointed out to me the chief beauties who then haunted The Wells. The number of adventurers who flock to Spa during the season is something incredible and they all hope to make their fortunes and, as may be supposed, most of them go away as naked as they came, if not more so. Money circulates with great freedom but principally amongst the gamesters, shopkeepers, money-lenders and courtesans. The money which proceeds from the gaming-table is split three ways: the first and smallest share goes to the Prince-Bishop of Liège; the second and larger portion, to the numerous amateur cheats who frequent the place; and by far the largest of all, to the coffers of twelve sharpers, who keep the tables and are authorised by the sovereign.

Thus goes the money. It comes from the pockets of the dupes, poor moths who burn their wings at Spa!

The Wells are a mere pretext for gaming, intriguing and fortune-hunting. There are a few honest people who go for amusement and a hunt for rest and relaxation after the toils of business.

Living is cheap enough at Spa. The *table d'hôte* is excellent and costs only a small French crown and one can get good lodging for the like sum.

I came home at noon, having won a score of louis. I went into the shop, intending to go to my room, but was stopped short by seeing a handsome brunette of nineteen or twenty, with great black eyes, voluptuous lips and shining teeth, measuring out ribbon on the counter. This, then, was the niece whom I had imagined as so ugly and who slept six paces from me! I concealed my surprise and sat down in the shop to gaze at her and endeavour to make her acquaintance. But she hardly seemed to see me and acknowledged my presence only by a slight inclination of the head. Her aunt came down to say that dinner was ready and I went upstairs and found the table laid for four. The servant brought in the soup and then asked me very plainly to give her some money if I wanted wine, as her master and mistress drank only beer. I was delighted with her freedom and gave her money to buy two bottles of Burgundy.

The master came up and showed me a gold repeater with a chain also of gold, by a well known modern maker. He wanted to know how much it was worth.

"Forty louis at the least."

"A gentleman wants me to give him twenty louis for it on the condition that I return it to-morrow if he brings me twenty-two."

"Then I advise you to accept his offer."

"I haven't the money."

"I will lend it to you with pleasure."

I gave him the twenty louis and placed the watch in my jewel-casket. At table the niece sat opposite to me, but I took care not to look at her and she, like a modest girl, did not say a score of words all through the meal. The meal was an excellent one, consisting of soup, boiled beef, an *entrée* and a roast. The mistress of the house told me the roast was in my honour. "For," she said, "we are not rich people and allow ourselves this luxury only on a Sunday." I admired her delicacy and the evident sincerity with which she spoke. I begged my entertainers to help me with my wine and they accepted the offer, saying they only wished they were rich enough to be able to drink half a bottle a day.

"I thought trade was good with you."

"The stuff is not ours and we have debts; besides, the expenses are very great. We have sold very little up to now."

"Do you sell only hats?"

"No, we have silk handkerchiefs, Paris stockings and lace ruffs, but they say everything is too dear."

"I will buy some things of you and will send all my friends here. Leave it to me; I will see what I can do for you."

"Mercy, fetch down one or two packets of those handkerchiefs and some stockings, large size, for the gentleman has a big leg."

Mercy, as the niece was called, obeyed. I pronounced the handkerchiefs superb and the stockings excellent. I bought a dozen and promised they would sell out their whole stock. They overwhelmed me with thanks and promised to put themselves entirely in my hands.

After coffee, which, like the roast, was in my honour, the aunt told her niece to take care not to awake me in the morning when she got up. She said she would not forget, but I begged her not to put herself out at all, as I was a very heavy sleeper.

In the afternoon I went to an armourer's to buy a brace of pistols and asked the man if he knew the tradesman with whom I was staying.

"We are cousins-german," he replied.

"Is he rich?"

"Yes—in debts."

"Why?"

"Because he is unfortunate, like most honest people."

"How about his wife?"

"Her careful economy keeps him above water."

"Do you know the niece?"

"Yes; she's a good girl, but very pious. Her silly scruples keep customers away from the shop."

"What do you think she should do to attract customers?"

"She should be more polite and not play the prude when anyone wants to give her a kiss."

"She is like that, is she?"

"Try her yourself and you will see. Last week she gave an officer a box on the ear. My cousin scolded her and she wanted to go back to Liège, however, the wife soothed her again. She is pretty enough, don't you think?"

"Certainly I do but, if she is as cross-grained as you say, the best thing will be to leave her alone."

After what I had heard, I made up my mind to change my room, for Mercy had pleased me in such a way that I was sure I should be obliged to pay her a call before long, and I detested Pamelas as heartily as I did Charpillons.

In the afternoon, I took Rzewuski and Roniker to the shop and they bought fifty ducats' worth of goods to oblige me. The next day the princess and Madame Tomatis bought all the handkerchiefs.

I came home at ten o'clock and found Mercy in bed, as I had done the night before. Next morning the watch was redeemed and the hatter returned me twenty-two louis. I made him a present of the two louis and said I should always be glad to lend him money in that way—the profits to be his. He left me, full of gratitude.

I was invited to dine with Madame Tomatis, so I told my hosts I would have the pleasure of supping with them, the costs to be borne

by me. The supper was good and the Burgundy excellent, but Mercy refused to taste it. She happened to leave the room for a moment at the close of the meal and I observed to the aunt that her niece was charming, but it was a pity she was so sad.

"She will have to change her ways or I will keep her no longer."

"Is she the same with all men?"

"With all."

"Then she has never been in love."

"She says she has not, but I don't believe her."

"I wonder she can sleep so comfortably with a man a few feet distant."

"She is not afraid."

Mercy came in, bade us good night and said she would go to bed. I made as if I would give her a kiss, but she turned her back on me and placed a chair in front of her alcove, so that I might not see her taking off her chemise. My hosts and hostess then went to bed and so did I, puzzling my head over the girl's behaviour, which struck me as most extraordinary and unaccountable. However, I slept peacefully and, when I awoke, the bird had left the nest. I felt inclined to have a little quiet discussion with the girl and see what I could make of her, but I saw no chance of my getting an opportunity. The latter availed himself of my offer of my purse to lend money on pledges and thereby made a good profit. There was no risk for me in the matter and he and his wife declared that they blessed the day on which I had come to live with them.

On the fifth or sixth day I awoke before Mercy did and, putting on only my dressing-gown, I approached her bed. She had a quick ear and woke up and no sooner did she see me coming towards her than she asked me what I wanted. I sat down on her bed and said gently that I only wanted to wish her good day and have a little talk. It was hot weather and she was covered by only a single sheet; stretching out one arm, I drew her towards me and begged her to let me give her a kiss. Her resistance made me angry and, passing an audacious hand under the sheet, I discovered that she was like other women, but I received a fisticuff on the nose that made me see a thousand stars and quite extinguished the fire of my concupiscence. The blood streamed from my nose and stained the bed of the furious Mercy. I kept my presence of mind and left her on the spot, as the blow she had given me was but a sample of what I might expect if I attempted reprisals. I washed my face in cold water and, as I was doing so, Mercy dressed and left the room.

At last my blood ceased to flow and I saw, to my great annoyance, that my nose was so swollen that my face was simply hideous. I covered it up with a handkerchief and sent for the hairdresser to do my hair. When this was done, my landlady brought me up some fine trout, which I found satisfactory, but, as I was giving her the money, she saw my face and uttered a cry of horror. I told her the whole story, freely acknowledging that I was in the wrong and begging her to say

nothing to her niece. Then, heeding not her excuses, I went out with my handkerchief before my face and visited a house which the Duchess of Richmond had left the day before.

Half the suites she had abandoned had been taken in advance by an Italian marquis; I took the other half, hired a servant and had my effects transported there from my old lodgings. The tears and supplications of my landlady had no effect whatever upon me; I felt I could not bear the sight of Mercy any longer.

In the house into which I had moved, I found an Englishman who said he would bring down the bruise in one hour and make the discolouration of the flesh disappear in twenty-four. I let him do as he liked and he kept his word; he rubbed the place with spirits of wine and some drug unknown to me; but, being ashamed to appear in public in the state I was in, I kept indoors for the rest of the day. At noon the distressed aunt brought me my trout and said that Mercy was cut to the heart to have used me so and that, if I would come back, I could do what I liked with her.

"You must realise," I replied, "that, if I complied with your request, the adventure would become public, I should be in a ridiculous posture and would wreck the honour of your house and your niece, who would not be able any longer to pass for a religious-minded young woman."

I made some reflections on the blow she had given the officer, much to the aunt's surprise, for she could not think how I had heard of it; and I showed her that, after having exposed me to her niece's brutality, her request was extremely out of place. I concluded by saying that, without any great stretch of imagination, I could believe her to be an accomplice in the act. This made her burst into tears and I had to apologise and promise by way of consolation to continue promoting her business, and so she left me in a calmer mood. Half an hour afterwards her husband came with twenty-five louis I had lent him on a gold snuffbox, set with diamonds, and proposed that I lend two hundred louis on a ring worth four hundred.

"It will be yours," he said, "if the owner does not bring me two hundred and twenty louis in a week's time."

I had the money and proceeded to examine the stone, which seemed to be a good diamond and would probably weigh six carats, as the owner declared. The setting was of gold.

"I consent to give the sum required if the owner is ready to give me a receipt."

"I will do so myself in the presence of witnesses."

"Very good. You shall have the money in the course of an hour; I am going to have the stone taken out first. That will make no difference to the owner, as I shall have it reset at my own expense. If he redeems it, the twenty louis shall be yours."

"I must ask him whether he has any objection to the stone being taken out."

"Very well, but you can tell him that, if he will not allow it to be done, he will get nothing for it."

He returned before long with a jeweller who said he would guarantee the stone to be at least two grains over the six carats.

"Have you weighed it?"

"No, but I am quite sure it weighs over six carats."

"Then you can lend the money on it."

"I cannot command such a sum."

"Can you tell me why the owner objects to the stone being taken out and put in again at my expense?"

"No, I can't; but he does object."

"Then he may take his ring somewhere else."

They went away, leaving me well pleased at my refusal, for it was plain that the stone either was false or had a false bottom.

I spent the rest of the day writing letters and partaking of a good supper. In the morning, I was waked by someone knocking at my door and, on my getting up to open it, what was my astonishment to find—Mercy!

I let her in and went back to bed and asked what she wanted with me so early in the morning. She sat down on the bed and began to overwhelm me with apologies. I replied by asking her why, if it was her principle to fly at her lovers like a tiger, she had slept almost in the same room as I.

"In sleeping in the closet," said she, "I obeyed my aunt's orders and, in striking you (for which I am very sorry), I was but defending my honour and I cannot admit that every man who sees me is at liberty to lose his reason. I think you will allow that your duty is to respect, and mine to defend, my honour."

"If that is your line of argument, I acknowledge that you are right, but you have nothing to complain of, for I bore your blow in silence and by my leaving the house you might know it was my intention to respect you in future. Did you come to hear me say this? If so, you are satisfied. But you will not be offended if I laugh at your excuses, for, after what you have said, I cannot help thinking them very laughable."

"What have I said?"

"That you only did your duty in flattening my nose. If so, do you think it necessary to apologise for the performance of duty?"

"I ought to have defended myself more gently. But forget everything and forgive me; I will defend myself no more in any way. I am yours and I love you and am ready to prove my love."

She could not have spoken more plainly and, as she spoke the last words, she fell on me with her face close to mine, which she bedewed with her tears. I was ashamed of such an easy conquest and gently withdrew from her embrace, telling her to return after the bruise on my face had disappeared. She left me deeply mortified.

The Italian who had taken half the suite of rooms had arrived in the course of the night. I asked his name and was given a card bearing the name of Marquis Don Antonio della Croce. Was it the Croce I knew? It was very possible. I asked what kind of establishment he had,

and was informed that the marchioness had a lady's maid and the marquis a secretary and two servants. I longed to see the nobleman in question.

I had not long to wait, for, as soon as he heard I was his neighbour, he came to see me and we spent two hours telling each other our adventures since we had parted in Milan. He had heard I had made the fortune of the girl he had abandoned and, in the six years that had elapsed, he had been travelling all over Europe, engaged in a constant strife with Fortune. In Paris and Brussels he had made a good deal of money and in the latter town he had fallen in love with a young lady of rank whom her father had shut up in a convent. He had taken her away and she it was whom he called the Marchioness della Croce, now six months with child.

He passed her off as his wife because, as he said, he meant to marry her eventually.

"I have fifty thousand francs in gold," said he, "and as much again in jewellery and various possessions. It is my intention to give suppers here and hold a bank but, if I play without correcting the freaks of Fortune, I am sure to lose." He intended going to Warsaw, thinking I would give him introductions to all my friends there, but he was mistaken and I did not even introduce him to my Polish friends at Spa. I told him he could easily make their acquaintance by himself and that I would neither make nor mar him.

I accepted his invitation to dinner for the same day. His secretary, a clever Veronese named Conti, as he called him, was merely his confederate and his wife was an accomplice essential to his profession.

At noon my friend the hatter came again with the ring, followed by the owner, who looked like a *bravo*. They were accompanied by the jeweller and another individual. The owner asked me once more to lend him two hundred louis on the ring.

My proper course would have been to beg to be excused; then I would have had no more trouble in the matter; but it was not to be. I wanted to make him see that the objection he made to having the stone taken out was an insuperable obstacle to my lending him the money.

"When the stone is removed," said I, "we shall see what it really is. Listen to my proposal: if it weighs twenty-six grains, I will give you, not two but three hundred louis, but, in its present condition, I will give nothing at all."

"You have no business to doubt my word; you insult me by doing so."

"Not at all; I have no intention of the kind. I simply propose a wager to you. If the stone be found to weigh twenty-six grains, I shall lose two hundred louis; if it weighs much less, you will lose the ring."

"That's a scandalous proposal; it's as much as to tell me I am a liar."

I did not like the tone with which these words were spoken and

I went up to the chest of drawers where I kept my pistols, and bade him go and leave me in peace.

Just then General Roniker came in and the owner of the ring told him of the dispute between us. The general looked at the ring and said to him:

"If anyone were to give me the ring, I would not have the stone taken out, because one should not look a gift horse in the mouth; but, if it came to a question of buying or lending, I would not give a crown for it, were the owner an emperor, before the stone was taken out, and I am very much surprised at your refusing to let this be done."

Without a word, the knave made for the door and the ring remained in the hands of my late host.

"Why didn't you give him his ring?" said I.

"Because I have advanced him fifty louis on it; but, if he does not redeem it to-morrow, I will have the stone taken out before a judge and afterwards I will sell it at auction."

"I don't like the man's manners and I hope you will never bring anyone to my rooms again."

The affair came to the following conclusion: The impostor did not redeem the ring and the Liège tradesman had the setting removed. The diamond was found to be placed on a bed of rock crystal, which formed two-thirds of the whole bulk. However, the diamond was worth fifty louis and an Englishman bought it. A week afterwards the knave met me as I was walking by myself, and begged me to follow him to a place where we should be free from observation, as his sword had somewhat to say to mine. Curiously enough, I happened to be wearing my sword at the time.

"I will not follow you," I replied. "The matter can be settled here."

"We are observed."

"All the better. Make haste and draw your sword first."

"The advantage is with you."

"I know it and so it ought to be. If you do not draw, I will proclaim you to be the coward I am sure you are."

At this, he drew his sword rapidly and came on, but I was ready to receive him. He began to fence, to try my mettle, but I lunged right at his chest and gave him three inches of cold steel. I would have killed him on the spot if he had not lowered his sword, saying he would get his revenge at another time. With this, he went off, holding his hand to the wound.

A score of people were close by, but no one troubled himself about the wounded man, as he was known to have been the aggressor. The duel had no further consequences for me. When I left Spa, the man was still in the surgeon's hands. He was something worse than an adventurer and all the French at Spa disowned him.

But to return to Croce and his dinner. The marchioness, his so-called wife, was a young lady of sixteen or seventeen, fair-complexioned and tall, with all the manners of the Belgian nobility. The history of her escape is well known to her brothers and sisters and, as her family

are still in existence, my readers will thank me for concealing her name.

Her husband had told her about me and she received me in the most gracious manner possible. She showed no signs of sadness or repentance for the step she had taken. She was with child and seemed to be near her term; nevertheless, she had the aspect of perfect health. Her countenance expressed candour and frankness of disposition in a remarkable degree. Her eyes were large and blue, her complexion a roseate hue; her small, sweet mouth and perfect teeth made her a beauty worthy of the brush of Albano.

I thought myself skilled in physiognomy and concluded that she was not only perfectly happy, but also the cause of happiness. But here let me say how vain a thing it is for anyone to pronounce a man or woman to be happy or unhappy from a merely cursory inspection.

The young marchioness had beautiful earrings and two rings, which gave me a pretext for admiring the beauty of her hands. Conti's wife did not cut any figure at all, and I was all eyes for the marchioness, whose name was Charlotte. I was so profoundly impressed by her that I was quite absent-minded during dinner.

I sought in vain to discover by what merits Croce had been able to seduce two such superior women. He was not a fine-looking man, he was not well educated, his manners were doubtful and his way of speaking by no means seductive; in fine, I saw nothing captivating about him and yet I could testify to his having made two girls leave their homes to follow him. I lost myself in conjecture but I had no premonition of what was to happen in the course of a few weeks.

When dinner was over, I took Croce aside and talked seriously to him. I impressed on him the necessity of circumspect conduct, as in my opinion he would be forever infamous if the beautiful woman whom he had seduced were to become unhappy by his fault.

"In future I mean to trust to my skill in play and thus I am sure of a comfortable living."

"Does she know that your revenue is fed solely by the purses of dupes?"

"She knows I am a gamester and, as she adores me, her will is mine. I am thinking of marrying her in Warsaw, before she is confined. If you are in any need of money, look upon my purse as your own."

I thanked him and once more pressed on him the duty of exercising extreme prudence.

As a matter of fact, I had no need of money. I had played with moderation and my profits amounted to nearly four hundred louis. Whenever luck turned against me, I was wise enough to turn my back on the board. Although the bruise that Mercy had given me was still apparent, I escorted the marchioness to the tables and there she drew all eyes upon her. She was fond of piquet and we played together for small stakes for some time. In the end she lost twenty crowns to me and I was forced to take the money, for fear of offending her.

When we went back, we met Croce and Conti, who had both won,

Conti a score of louis at faro, and Croce more than a hundred guineas at *passee-dix*, which he had been playing at a club of Englishmen. I was more lively at supper than I had been at dinner and excited Charlotte to laughter by my wit.

Thereafter the Poles and the two Tomatis saw me only at intervals. I was in love with the fair marchioness and everybody said it was only natural. When a week had elapsed, Croce, finding that the pigeons would not come to be plucked, despite the suppers he gave, went to the public rooms and lost continually. He was as used to loss as to gain and his spirits were unaltered; he was still gay, still ate well and drank better and caressed his victim, who had no suspicions of what was going on.

I loved her but did not dare reveal my passion, fearing lest it be unrequited, and I was afraid to tell her of Croce's losses, lest she ascribe my action to some ulterior motive; in fine, I was afraid to lose the trust she had already begun to place in me.

At the end of three weeks Conti, who had played with prudence and success, left Croce and set out for Verona with his wife and servant. A few days later Charlotte dismissed her maid, sending her back to Liège, her native town.

Towards the middle of September all the Polish party left the Spa for Paris, where I promised to rejoin them. I stayed only for Charlotte's sake; I foresaw a catastrophe and would not abandon her. Every day Croce lost heavily and at last was obliged to sell his jewellery. Then came Charlotte's turn; she had to give up her watches, rings, earrings and all her jewels. He lost everything, but this wonderful girl was as affectionate as ever. Finally, to bring things to a head, he despoiled her of her lace and her best gowns and then, selling his own wardrobe, went to his last battle with Fortune, provided with two hundred louis. He played like a madman, without common sense or prudence, and lost all.

His pockets were empty and, seeing me, he beckoned to me and I followed him out of Spa.

"My friend," he began, "I have two alternatives: I can kill myself this instant or I can fly, without returning home. I shall adopt the latter and go to Warsaw on foot and I leave my wife in your hands, for I know you adore her. It must be your task to give her the dreadful news of the pass to which I have come. Have a care of her; she is too good by far for a poor wretch like me. Take her to Paris and I will write to you there at your brother's address. I know you have money, but I would rather die than accept a single louis from you. I have still two or three pieces left and I assure you I am richer at the present moment than I was two months ago. Farewell; once more I commend Charlotte to your care; I would that she had never known me."

With these words, he shed tears and, embracing me, went his way. I was stupefied at what lay before me: I had to inform a pregnant woman that the man she dearly loved had deserted her. The only

thought that sustained me in that moment was that I would be doing it for love of her, and I felt thankful I had sufficient means to secure her from privation.

I went to the house and told her we might dine at once, as the marquis would be engaged till evening. She sighed and wished him luck and we proceeded to dine. I disguised my emotions so well that she conceived no suspicion. After the meal was over, I asked her to walk with me in the garden of the Capuchin Monastery, which was close at hand. To prepare her for the fatal news, I asked if she would approve of her lover exposing himself to assassination for the sake of bidding adieu to her rather than making his escape.

"I would blame him for doing so," she replied. "He ought to escape by all means, if only to save his life for my sake. Has my husband done so? Speak openly to me. My spirit is strong enough to resist even so fatal a blow, for I know I have a friend in you. Speak!"

"Well, I will tell you all. But, first of all, remember this: you must look upon me as a tender father, who will never let you want so long as life remains to him."

"In that case I cannot be called unfortunate, for I have a true friend. Say on."

I told all that Croce had said to me, not omitting his last words: "I commend Charlotte to your care; I would that she had never known me."

For a few minutes she remained motionless, as one turned into stone. By her attitude, by her laboured and unequal breath, I could divine somewhat of the battle that love, anger, sorrow and pity were waging in her noble breast. I was cut to the heart. At last she wiped away the big tears that were beginning to trickle down her cheeks and, turning to me, sighed and said, "Dear friend, since I can count on you, I am far indeed from utter misery."

"I swear to you, Charlotte, that I will never leave you till I place you again in your husband's hands, provided I do not die before."

"That is enough. I swear eternal gratitude and to be as submissive to you as a good daughter ought to be."

The religion and philosophy with which her heart was fortified, though she made no parade of either, began to calm her spirit and she proceeded to make some reflections on Croce's unhappy lot, but all in pity, not in anger, excusing his inveterate passion for play. She had often heard from Croce's lips the story of the Marseilles girl whom he had left penniless in an inn in Milan, commending her to my care. She thought it something wonderful that I should again be intervening as the tutelary genius, but her situation was much the worse, for she was with child.

"There's another difference," I added, "for I made the fortune of the first by finding her an honest husband, whereas I should never have the courage to adopt the same method with the second."

"While Croce lives, I am no man's wife but his; nevertheless I am glad to find myself free."

When we were back in the house, I advised her to send away the servant and pay his journey to Besançon, where she had taken him. Thus all unpleasantness would be avoided. I made her sell all that remained of her poor lover's wardrobe, as also his carriage, for mine was a better one. She showed me all she had left, which amounted only to some sets of linen and three or four dresses.

We remained at Spa, without going out of doors. She could see that my love was a tenderer passion than the love of a father, and she told me so and that she was obliged to me for the respect with which I treated her. We sat together for hours, she folded in my arms, whilst I gently kissed her beautiful eyes and asked no more. I was happy in her gratitude and in my powers of self-restraint. When temptation was too strong, I left the beautiful girl till I was myself again, and such conquests made me proud. In the affection between us there was somewhat of the purity of a man's first love.

I wanted a small travelling-cap and the servant of the house went to my former lodging to order one. Mercy brought several for me to choose from. She blushed when she saw me, but I said nothing to her. When she had gone, I told Charlotte the whole story and she laughed with all her heart when I reminded her of the bruise on my face when we first met and informed her that Mercy had given it to me. She praised my firmness in rejecting her repentance and agreed with me in thinking that the whole plan had been concerted between her and her aunt.

We left Spa without any servant and, when we reached Liège, we took the way of the Ardennes, as she was afraid of being recognised if we passed through Brussels. At Luxemburg we engaged a servant, who attended on us till we reached Paris. All the way Charlotte was tender and affectionate, but her condition prescribed limits to her love and I could only look forward to the time after her delivery. In Paris we put up at the Hôtel Montmorency in the street of the same name.

Paris struck me quite as a new place. Madame d'Urfé was dead, my friends had changed their houses and their fortunes; the poor had become rich and the rich, poor; new streets and buildings were rising on all sides; I hardly knew my way about the town. Everything was dearer; poverty was rampant and luxury at its highest pitch. Perhaps Paris is the only city where so great a change could take place in the course of five or six years.

The first call I made was on Madame du Romain, who was delighted to see me. I repaid her the money she had so kindly lent me in the time of my distress. She was well in health but harassed by so many anxieties and private troubles that she said Providence must have sent me to her to relieve her of all her griefs by my *cabala*. I told her I would wait on her at any hour or hours; and this, indeed, was the least I could do for the woman who had been so kind to me.

My brother had gone to live in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Both he and his wife (who remained constant to him, despite his physical

disability) were overjoyed to see me and entreated me to come and stop with them. I told them I should be glad to do so as soon as the lady who travelled with me had gotten over her confinement. I did not think proper to tell them her story and they had the delicacy to refrain from questioning me on the subject. The same day I called on Princess Lubomirska and Tomatis, begging them not to take it amiss if my visits were few and far between, as the lady they had seen at Spa was approaching her confinement and demanded all my care.

After the discharge of these duties I remained constantly by Charlotte's side. On October 8th, I thought it would be well to take her to Madame Lamarre, a midwife who lived in the Faubourg Saint-Denis, and Charlotte was of the same opinion. We went together, she saw the room and bed and heard how she would be tended and looked after, for all of which I would pay. At nightfall we drove to the place with a trunk containing all her effects.

As we were leaving the Rue Montmorency, our carriage was obliged to stop, to allow the funeral of some rich man to go by. Charlotte covered her face with her handkerchief and whispered in my ear, "Dearest, I know it is a foolish superstition, but, to a woman in my condition, such a meeting is of evil omen."

"What, Charlotte! I thought you were too wise to have such silly fears. A woman in childbed is not a sick woman and no woman ever died of giving birth to a child except some other disease intervened."

"Yes, my dear philosopher, it is like a duel; there are two men in perfect health when, all of a sudden, there comes a sword-thrust and one of them is dead."

"That's a witty idea. But bid all gloomy thoughts go by and, after your child is born and we have placed it in good hands, you shall come with me to Madrid and there I hope to see you happy and contented."

All the way I did my best to cheer her, for I knew only too well the fatal effects of a fixed idea on a delicate constitution and especially on a young woman in Charlotte's condition.

When I saw her completely settled, I returned to the hotel and the next day took up my quarters with my brother. However, as long as my Charlotte lived, I only slept at his house, for from nine in the morning till after midnight I was with my dear.

On October 13th, Charlotte was attacked with a fever which never left her. On the 17th, she was happily delivered of a boy, who was immediately taken to the church and baptised at the express wish of the mother. Charlotte wrote down what its name was to be—Jacques (after me), Charles (after her), son of Antonio della Croce and of Charlotte de X— (she gave her real name). When it was brought from the church, she told Madame Lamarre to carry it to the Foundling Hospital with the certificate of baptism in its linen. I vainly endeavoured to persuade her to leave the care of the child to me. She said that, if it lived, the father could easily reclaim it. On the same day,

October 18th, the midwife gave me the following certificate, which I still possess:

"We, J. B. Dorival, Councillor to the King, Commissary of the Châtelet, formerly Superintendent of Police in the City of Paris, do certify that there has been taken to the Hospital for Children a male infant, appearing to be one day old, brought from the Faubourg Saint-Denis by the midwife Lamarre and bearing a certificate of baptism to the effect that its name is Jacques-Charles, son of Antonio della Croce and of Charlotte de X—. Wherefore, we have delivered the above certificate at our office in the City of Paris, this 18th day of October, in the year of Our Lord, 1767, at seven o'clock in the afternoon.

Dorival."

If any of my readers have any curiosity to know the real name of the mother I have given them the means of satisfying it.

After this I did not leave the invalid's bedside for a single instant. In spite of all the doctor's care, the fever increased and at five o'clock in the morning of October 26th, she succumbed to it. An hour before she sighed her last, she bade me a final farewell in the presence of the venerable ecclesiastic who had confessed her at midnight. The tears which gather fast as I write these words are probably the last honours I shall pay to this poor victim of a man who is still alive and whose destiny seemed to be to make women unhappy.

I sat weeping by the bed of her I loved so dearly and in vain Madame Lamarre tried to induce me to come and sit with her. I loved the poor corpse better than all the world outside.

At noon my brother and his wife came to visit me; they had not seen me for a week and were getting anxious. They saw the body, lovely in death; they understood my tears and mingled theirs with mine. At last I asked them to leave me and I remained all night by Charlotte's bed, resolved not to leave it till her body had been consigned to the grave.

The day before this morning of unhappy memory my brother had given me several letters, but I had not opened any of them. On my return from the funeral I proceeded to do so and the first one was from M. Dandolo, announcing the death of M. de Bragadin; but I could not weep. For twenty-two years, M. de Bragadin had been as a father to me, living poorly and even going into debt, that I might have enough. He could not leave me anything, as his property was entailed, while his furniture and his library would become the prey of his creditors. His two friends, who were my friends also, were poor and could give me nothing but their love. The dreadful news was accompanied by a bill of exchange for a thousand crowns, which he had sent me twenty-four hours before his death, foreseeing that it would be the last gift he would ever make me.

I was overwhelmed and thought that Fortune had done her worst to me.

I spent three days in my brother's house without going out. On the fourth, I began to pay assiduous court to Princess Lubomirska, who had written the King, her brother, a letter that must have mortified him, as she proved beyond a doubt that the tales he had listened to against me were mere calumny. But your kings do not allow so small a thing to vex or mortify them. Besides, Stanislas Augustus had just received a dreadful insult from Russia. Repnin's violence in kidnapping the three senators who had spoken their minds at the Diet was a blow which must have pierced the hapless King to the heart.

The princess had left Warsaw more from hatred than from love, though such was not the general opinion. As I had decided to visit the Court of Madrid before going to Portugal, the princess gave me a letter of introduction to the powerful Count of Aranda; the Marquis de Caraccioli, who was still in Paris, gave me three letters, one for Prince de la Catolica, the Neapolitan ambassador at Madrid, one for the Duke of Lossada, the King's favourite and lord high steward, and a third for the Marquis de Mora-Pignatelli.

On November 4th, I went to a concert with a ticket the princess had given me. When the concert was half-way through, I heard my name pronounced, accompanied by scornful laughter. I turned round and saw the gentleman who was speaking contemptuously of me. He was a tall young man, sitting between two men advanced in years. I stared him in the face, but he turned his head away and continued his impertinences, saying, amongst other things, that I had robbed him of a million francs, at least, by my swindling his late aunt, the Marchioness d'Urfé.

"You are an impudent liar," I said to him, "and, if we were out of this hall, I would give you a kick to teach you to speak respectfully."

With these words, I made my way out of the hall and, on turning my head round, I saw that the two elderly men were keeping the young blockhead back. I got into my carriage and waited some time and, as he did not come, I drove to the theatre and chanced to find myself in the same box as Madame Valville. She informed me that she had left the boards and was being kept by the Marquis de Brumoi.

"I congratulate you and wish you good luck."

"I hope you will come to supper at my house."

"I should be only too happy, but unfortunately I have an engagement; but I will come to see you if you will give me your address."

So saying, I slipped into her hand a rouleau, it being the fifty louis I owed her.

"What is this?"

"The money you lent me so kindly at Königsberg."

"This is neither the time nor the place to return it. I will take it only at my own house, so please do not insist."

I put the money back into my pocket, she gave me her address and I left her. I felt too sad for a *tête-à-tête* with this charming person.

Two days later, as I was at table with my brother, my sister-in-law and some young Russians whom he was teaching to paint, I was told

that a Chevalier de Saint-Louis wanted to speak to me in the ante-chamber. I went out and he handed me a paper without making any preface. I opened the document and found it was signed Louis. The great King ordered me to leave Paris within twenty-four hours and his realm of France within three weeks, and the reason assigned was: "It is our good pleasure."

CHAPTER 124

"WELL, chevalier," I said, "I have read the little note and I will try to oblige His Majesty as soon as possible. However, if I have not time to get away in twenty-four hours, His Majesty must work his dread will on me."

"My dear sir, the twenty-four hours are a mere formality. Sign an acknowledgment of the order and give me a receipt for the *lettre de cachet* and you can go at your convenience. All I ask of you is that you give me your word of honour not to go to the theatres or public places of amusement on foot."

"I give you my word with pleasure."

I took the chevalier to my room and wrote out the acknowledgment he dictated and, upon his remarking that he would be glad to see my brother, whom he knew already, I led him into the dining-room and explained with a cheerful face the purport of his visit.

My brother laughed and said, "But, M. Buhot, this news is like March in Lent; it was quite unnecessary, my brother was going in the course of a week."

"All the better. If the minister had been aware of that, he would not have troubled himself about it."

"Is the reason known?"

"I heard something about a proposal to kick a gentleman who, though young, is too exalted a person to be spoken to in such a manner."

"Why, chevalier," said I, "the phrase is a mere formality like your 'twenty-four hours,' for, if the impudent young rascal had come out, he would have met me and his sword would have been sufficient to ward off any kicks."

I then told the whole story and Buhot agreed that I was in the right throughout, adding that the police were also in the right to prevent any encounter between us. He advised me to go next morning and tell the tale to M. de Sartine, who knew me and would be glad to have the account from my own lips. I said nothing, as I knew the famous superintendent of police to be a dreadful sermoniser.

The *lettre de cachet* was dated November sixth, and I did not leave Paris till the twentieth.

I informed all my friends of the great honour His Majesty had done me and I would not hear of Madame du Romain appealing to the King on my behalf, though she said she felt certain she could get

the order revoked. The Duc de Choiseul gave me a posting passport dated November 19th, which I still preserve.

I left Paris without any servant, still grieving, though quietly, over Charlotte's fate. I had a hundred louis in cash and a bill of exchange on Bordeaux for eight thousand francs. I enjoyed perfect health and felt almost as if I had been rejuvenated. I had need of the utmost prudence and discretion for the future. The deaths of M. de Bragadin and Madame d'Urfé had left me alone in the world and I was slowly but steadily approaching what is called "a certain age," when women begin to look on a man with coldness.

I called on only Madame Valville on the eve of my departure and found her in a richly furnished house and her strongbox well filled with diamonds. When I proposed to return her the fifty louis, she asked if I had a thousand and, on learning that I had only five hundred, she refused the money absolutely and offered me her purse, which I, in turn, refused. I have not seen the excellent creature since then but, before I left her, I gave her some excellent advice as to the necessity of saving her gains for the time of her old age, when her charms would be no more. I hope she profited by my counsel. I bade farewell to my brother and my sister-in-law at six o'clock in the evening and got into my chaise in the moonlight, intending to travel all night, so as to dine next day at Orléans, where I wanted to see an old friend. In half an hour I was at Bourg-la-Reine and there I began to fall asleep. At seven in the morning I reached Orléans.

My beloved France, where all went so well in those days, despite *lettres de cachet*, despite *corvées*, despite the people's misery and the King's "good pleasure," dear France, where art thou now? Thy sovereign is the people now, the most brutal and tyrannical sovereign in the world. Thou hast no longer to bear the "good pleasure" of the sovereign, but thou hast to endure the whims of the mob and the fancies of the Republic, the ruin of all good government. A republic presupposes self-denial and a virtuous people; it cannot endure long in our selfish and luxurious days.

I went to see Bodin, a dancer who had married Madame Joffroy, one of my thousand mistresses, whom I had loved twenty-two years before and had seen later in Turin, Paris and Vienna. These meetings with old friends and sweethearts were always a weak or, rather, a strong point with me. For a moment, I seemed to be young again and I fed once more on the delights of long ago. Repentance was no part of my composition.

Bodin and his wife (who was rather ugly than old-looking and had become pious to suit her husband's tastes, thus giving to God the devil's leavings), Bodin, I say, lived on a small estate he had purchased and attributed all the agricultural misfortunes he met with in the course of the year to the wrath of an avenging Deity. I had a fasting dinner with them, for it was Friday and they observed strictly all the rules of the Church. I told them of my adventures of the past years and, when I had finished, they proceeded to make reflections on

the faults and failings of men who have not God for a guide. They told me what I knew already: that I had an immortal soul, that there was a God that judgeth righteously and that it was high time for me to take example by them and renounce all the pomps and vanities of the world.

"And turn Capuchin, I suppose?"

"You might do much worse."

"Very good; but I shall wait till my beard grows the necessary length in a single night."

In spite of their silliness, I was not sorry to have spent six hours with these good creatures, who seemed sincerely repentant and happy in their way, and after an affectionate embrace I took leave of them and travelled all night. I stopped at Chanteloup to see the monument to the taste and magnificence of the Duc de Choiseul and spent twenty-four hours there. A gentlemanly and polished individual, who did not know me and for whom I had no introduction, lodged me in a fine suite of rooms, gave me supper and would sit down to table with me only after I had used all my powers of persuasion. The next day he treated me in the same way, gave me an excellent dinner, showed me everything and behaved as if I were some prince, though he did not even ask my name. His attentions even extended to seeing that none of his servants were at hand when I got into my carriage and drove off. This was to prevent my giving money to any of them.

The beautiful castle, on which the Duc de Choiseul had spent such immense sums, was in reality costing him nothing. He owed the entire sum but did not trouble himself in the slightest degree, as he was a sworn foe to the principle of *meum* and *tuum*. He never paid his creditors and never disturbed his debtors. He was a generous man, a lover of art and artists, to whom he liked to be of service, and what they did for him he looked upon as a grateful offering. He was intellectual but a hater of all detail and minute research, being of a naturally indolent and procrastinating disposition. His favourite saying was: "There's time enough for that."

When I got to Poitiers, I wanted to push on to Vivonne; it was seven o'clock in the evening and two girls endeavoured to dissuade me from this course.

"It's very cold," said they, "and the road is none of the best. You are no courier; sup here, we will give you a good bed and you shall start again in the morning."

"I have made up my mind to go on, but, if you will keep me company at supper, I will stay for that."

"That would cost you too dearly."

"Never too dear. Quick, make up your minds!"

"Very well, we will sup with you."

"Then lay the table for three; I must leave in one hour."

"In one hour! You mean three, sir; papa will take two hours to get you a good supper."

"Then I will not leave, but you must keep me company all night."

"We will if papa does not object. We will have your chaise put into the coach-house."

These two minxes gave me an excellent supper and were a match for me in drinking, as well as in eating. The wine was delicious and we stayed at table till midnight, laughing and joking together, though without overstepping the bounds of propriety.

About midnight the father came in jovially and asked how I had enjoyed my supper.

"Very much," I answered, "but I have enjoyed still more the company of your charming daughters."

"I am delighted to hear it. Whenever you come this way, they will keep you company, but now it is past midnight and time for them to go to bed."

I nodded my head, for Charlotte's death was still too fresh in my memory to admit of my indulging in any voluptuous pleasures. I wished the girls a pleasant sleep and do not think I would even have kissed them if the father had not urged me to do this honour to their charms. However, my vanity made me to put some fire into the embrace and I have no doubt they thought me a prey to vain desires.

When I was alone, I reflected that, if I did not forget Charlotte, I was a lost man. I slept till nine o'clock and told the servant who came to light my fire to get coffee for three and have my horses put in.

The two pretty girls came to breakfast with me and I thanked them for having made me stay the night. I asked for the bill and the eldest said it was in round figures a louis apiece. I showed no sign of anger at this outrageous fleecing but gave them three louis with the best grace imaginable and went on my way. When I reached Angoulême, where I expected to find Noël, the King of Prussia's cook, I found only his father, whose talents in the matter of *pâtés* was something prodigious. His eloquence was as fervent as his ovens. He said he would send his *pâtés* all over Europe to any address I liked to give him.

"What! To Venice, London, Warsaw, St. Petersburg?"

"To Constantinople, if you like. You need only give me your address and you need not pay me till you get word that the *pâtés* have arrived."

I sent his *pâtés* to my friends in Venice, Warsaw and Turin and everybody thanked me for the delicious dish.

Noël had made quite a fortune. He assured me he had sent large consignments to America and, with the exception of some losses by shipwreck, all the *pâtés* had arrived in excellent condition. They were made chiefly of turkeys, partridges and hare, seasoned with truffles, but he also made *pâtés de foie gras*, and of larks and thrushes, according to the season.

In two days I arrived at Bordeaux, a beautiful town, second only to Paris with all due respect to Lyons, be it said. I spent a week there, eating and drinking of the best, for the living there is the choicest in the world.

I transferred my bill of exchange for eight thousand francs to a

Madrid house and crossed the Landes, passing by Mont-de-Marsan, Bayonne and Saint-Jean-de-Luz, where I sold my post-chaise. From Saint-Jean-de-Luz I went to Pampeluna by way of the Pyrenees, which I crossed on mule-back, my baggage being carried by another mule. The mountains struck me as higher than the Alps. In this I may possibly be wrong but I am certain that the Pyrenees are the more picturesque, fertile and agreeable of the two.

At Pampeluna a man named Andrea Capello took charge of me and my luggage and we set out for Madrid. For the first twenty leagues the travelling was easy enough and the road as good as any in France. This road did honour to the memory of M. de Gages, who had administered Navarre after the Italian war and had, as I was assured, constructed this fine road at his own expense. Twenty years earlier I had been arrested by this famous general, but he had established a claim on posterity greater than any of his victories. His general's laurels were dyed in blood, but, as the maker of a good road, he was a solid benefactor to all posterity.

In time this road came to an end and from there on it would be incorrect to say that the roads were bad, for, to tell the truth, there were no roads at all. There were steep ascents and violent descents, but no traces of carriage wheels, and so it is throughout the whole of Old Castile. There are no good inns, only miserable dens, scarce good enough for the muleteers, who make their beds beside their animals Signor or, rather, Señor Andrea tried to choose the least wretched inns for me and, after having provided for the mules, would go round the entire village to get something for me to eat. The landlord would not stir; he showed me a room where I could sleep if I liked, containing a fireplace in which I could light a fire if I thought fit, but, as for procuring firewood or provisions, he left that all to me. Wretched Spain!

The sum asked for a night's accommodation was less than a farmer would ask in France or Germany for leave to sleep in his barn; but there was always an extra charge of a *pizetta por el ruido* (a small bit for the noise). The *pizetta* is worth four reals—about twenty-one French sous.

The landlord smoked his paper cigarettes nonchalantly enough, blowing clouds of smoke into the air with immense dignity. To him, poverty was as good as riches; his wants were small and his means sufficed for them. In no country in Europe do the lower orders live so contentedly on a very little as in Spain. Two ounces of white bread, a handful of roast chestnuts or acorns (called *bellotas* in Spanish) suffice to keep a Spaniard for a day. It is his glory to say, when a stranger is departing from his abode, "I have not given myself any trouble in waiting on him."

This proceeds in part from idleness and in part from Castilian pride. A Castilian should not lower himself, they say, by attending on a *Gavacho*, by which name the Spaniards know the French, and, indeed, all foreigners. It is not so offensive as the Turkish appellation of "dog" or the "damned foreigner" of the English. Of course, persons who have

travelled or have had a liberal education do not speak in this way and a respectable foreigner will find reasonable Spaniards, as he will find reasonable Turks and Englishmen.

On the second night of my journey I slept at Agreda, a small and ugly town or, rather, village. There, Sister Marie d'Agreda became so crazy as to write a life of the Virgin, which she affirmed to have been dictated to her by the mother of Our Lord. The State Inquisitors had given me this work to read when I was under The Leads and the reader may remember that the phantasies of this visionary nearly drove me mad.

We did ten Spanish leagues a day and long and weary leagues they seemed to me. One morning I thought I saw a dozen Capuchins walking slowly in front of us but, when we caught up with them, I found they were women of all ages.

"Are they mad?" I said to Señor Andrea.

"Not at all. They wear the Capuchin habit out of piety and you would not find a chemise on one of them."

There was nothing surprising in their not having chemises, for the chemise is a scarce article in Spain, but the idea of pleasing God by wearing a Capuchin's habit struck me as extremely odd. I will here relate an amusing adventure which befell me on my way.

At the gate of a town not far from Madrid I was asked for my passport. I handed it over and got down to amuse myself. I found the chief of the custom house engaged in an argument with a foreign priest, who was on his way to Madrid and had no passport for the capital. He showed one he had for Bilbao, but the official was not satisfied. The priest was a Sicilian and I asked him why he exposed himself to being placed in this disagreeable predicament. He said he thought it was unnecessary to have a passport in Spain when one had once journeyed in the country.

"I want to go to Madrid," he said to me, "and hope to obtain a chaplaincy in the house of a grandee. I have a letter for him."

"Show it; they will let you pass then."

"You are right."

The poor priest drew out the letter and showed it to the official, who opened it, looked at the signature and absolutely shrieked when he saw the name Squillace.

"What, señor abbé! You are going to Madrid with a letter from Squillace and you dare to show it?"

The clerks, constables and hangers-on, hearing that the hated Squillace, who would have been stoned to death if it had not been for the King's protection, was the poor abbé's only patron, began to beat him violently, much to the poor Sicilian's astonishment.

I interposed, however, and after some trouble succeeded in rescuing the priest, who was then allowed to pass—as a set-off, I believe, against the blows he had received.

This Squillace was sent to Venice as Spanish ambassador and died in Venice at an advanced age. He was a man designed to be an object of

intense hatred to the people, as he was simply ruthless in his taxation.

The door of my room had a lock on the outside but none on the inside. For the first and second night I let it pass but on the third I told Señor Andrea that I must have this altered.

"Señor Don Jaime, you must bear with it in Spain, for the Holy Inquisition must always be at liberty to inspect the rooms of foreigners."

"But what in the Devil's name does your cursed Inquisition want . . . ?"

"For the love of God, Señor Jaime, speak not thus! If you were overheard, we should both be undone."

"Well, what can the Holy Inquisition want to know?"

"Everything. It wants to know whether you eat meat on fast days; whether persons of opposite sexes sleep together; if so, whether they are married and, if not married, it will cause both parties to be imprisoned, in fine, Señor Don Jaime, the Holy Inquisition is continually watching over our souls in this country."

When we met a priest bearing the *viaticum* to some sick man, Señor Andrea would tell me imperatively to get out of my carriage and then there was no choice but to kneel in the mud or dust, as the case might be. The chief subject of dispute at that time was the fashion of wearing breeches. Those who wore *braguettes* were imprisoned and all tailors making breeches with *braguettes* were severely punished. Nevertheless, people persisted in wearing them and the priests and monks preached in vain against the indecency of such a habit. A revolution seemed imminent, but the matter was happily settled without shedding of blood. An edict was published and affixed to the doors of all the churches in which it was declared that breeches with *braguettes* were to be worn only by the public hangman. Then the fashion passed away, for no one cared to pass for the public executioner.

Little by little I got an insight into the manners of the Spanish nation as I passed through Guadalaxara and Alcalá and at length arrived at Madrid.

Guadalaxara, or Guadalajara, is pronounced by the Spaniards with a strong aspirate, the *x* and *j* having the same force. The vowel *a*, the queen of letters, reigns supreme in Spain; it is a relic of the old Moorish language. Everybody knows that Arabic abounds in *a*'s and perhaps the philologists are right in calling Arabic the most ancient of languages, since the *a* is the most natural and easy to pronounce of all the letters. It seems to me very mistaken to call such names as Achala, Aranda, Almada, Acara, Agracaramba, Alcántara, etc., barbarous, for the sonorous ring with which they are pronounced renders the Castilian the richest of all modern languages. Spanish is undoubtedly one of the finest, most energetic and most majestic languages in the world. When it is pronounced *ore rotundo*, it is susceptible of the most poetic harmony. It would be superior to the Italian if it were not for the three guttural letters, in spite of what the Spaniards say to the contrary. It is no good remonstrating with them. *Quisquis amat ranam, ranam putat esse Dianam.*

As I was entering by the Gate of Alcalá, my luggage was searched and the clerks paid the greatest attention to my books and were very disappointed to find only the *Iliad* in Greek and a Latin Horace. These were taken away but were returned to me three days after at my lodging in the Rue de la Croix, where I had gone in spite of Señor Andrea, who had wanted to take me elsewhere. A worthy man whom I met in Bordeaux had given me the address. One of the ceremonies I had to undergo at the Gate of Alcalá displeased me in the highest degree. A clerk asked me for a pinch of snuff, so I took out my snuffbox and gave it to him but, instead of taking a pinch, he snatched it out of my hands and said, "Señor, this snuff will not pass in Spain." (It was French rappee.) And, after turning it out on the ground, he gave me back the box.

The authorities are most rigorous in the matter of this innocent powder and in consequence an immense contraband trade is carried on. The spies employed by the Spanish snuff-makers are always on the lookout after foreign snuff and, if they detect anyone carrying it, they make him pay dearly for the luxury. The ambassadors of foreign powers are the only persons exempted from the prohibition. The King, who merely stuffs into his enormous nose one enormous pinch as he rises in the morning, wants to have all the other snuff-takers keep his factory going. When Spanish snuff is pure, it is very good but, at the time I was in Spain, the genuine article could hardly be bought for its weight in gold. By reason of the natural inclination towards forbidden fruit, the Spaniards are extremely fond of foreign snuff and care little for their own; thus snuff is smuggled to an enormous extent.

My lodging was comfortable enough, but I felt the want of a fire, as the cold was more trying than that of Paris, in spite of the southern latitude. The cause of this is that Madrid is the highest town in Europe. From whatever part of the coast one starts, one has to mount to reach the capital. The town is also surrounded by mountains and hills, so that the slightest touch of wind from the north makes the cold intense. The air of Madrid is not healthful for strangers, especially for those of a full habit of body; it suits the Spaniards well enough, for they are dry and thin and wear a cloak even in the dog days.

The men of Spain dwell mentally in a limited horizon, bounded by prejudice on every side; but the women, though ignorant, are usually intelligent, while both sexes are the prey of desires as lively as their native air, as burning as the sun that shines on them. Every Spaniard hates a foreigner simply because he is a foreigner, but the women avenge us by loving us, though with great precautions, for your Spaniard is intensely jealous. They watch most jealously over the honour of their wives and daughters. As a rule the men are ugly, though there are numerous exceptions, while the women are pretty and beauties are not uncommon. The southern blood in their veins inclines them to love and they are always ready to enter into an intrigue and outwit the spies by whom they are surrounded. The lover who runs the greatest dangers is always the favourite. In the public walks, the churches, the

theatres, the Spanish women are always speaking the language of the eyes. If the person to whom it is addressed knows how to seize the instant, he may be sure of success but, if not, the opportunity will never be offered him again.

I required some kind of heat in my room and could not bear a charcoal brazier, so I persuaded an ingenious tinsmith to make me a stove with a pipe going out of the window. However, he was so proud of his success that he made me pay dearly.

Before the stove was ready, I was told where I might go and warm myself an hour before noon and stay till dinner-time. It is called *La Puerta del Sol* (The Gate of the Sun). It is not a gate, but it takes its name from the manner in which the source of all heat lavishes his treasures there and warms all who come and bask in his rays. I found a numerous company promenading there, walking and talking, but it was not much to my taste.

I wanted a servant who could speak French, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting one and had to pay dearly, for in Madrid the kind of man I wanted was called a page. I could not compel him to mount behind my carriage, nor carry a package, nor light me by night with a torch or lantern.

My page was a man of thirty and terribly ugly, but this was a recommendation, as his ugliness secured him from the jealous suspicions of husbands. A woman of rank will not drive out without one of these pages seated in the forepart of her carriage. They are said to be more difficult to seduce than the strictest of *duennas*.

I was obliged to take one of this rascally tribe into my service and I only wish he had broken his leg on his way to my house!

I delivered all my introductions, beginning with the letter from Princess Lubomirska to the Count of Aranda. The count had covered himself with glory by driving the Jesuits out of Spain. He was more powerful than the King himself and never went out without a number of royal guardsmen about him, whom he had sit at his table. Of course all the Spaniards hated him, but he did not seem to care much about that. A profound politician and absolutely resolute and firm, he privately indulged in every luxury that he forbade to others, and did not care whether people talked of it or not.

He was a rather ugly man, with a disagreeable squint. His reception of me was far from cordial.

"What do you want in Spain?" he began.

"To add fresh treasures to my store of experience by observing the manners and the customs of the country and, if possible, to serve the Government with such feeble talents as I may possess."

"Well, you have no need of my protection. If you do not infringe the laws, no one will disturb you. As to your obtaining employment, you had better go to the representative of your country; he will introduce you at Court and make you known."

"My lord, the Venetian ambassador will do nothing for me; I am

in disgrace with his government. He will not even receive me at the embassy."

"Then I would advise you to give up all hopes of employment, for the King would begin by asking your ambassador about you and his answer would be fatal. You will do well to be satisfied with amusing yourself."

After this I called on the Neapolitan ambassador, who talked in much the same way. Even the Marquis of Moras, one of the most agreeable men in Spain, did not hold out any hopes. The Duke of Lossada, the high steward and favourite of His Catholic Majesty, sorry to be unable to do me any service, despite his good will, advised me to try to make my way into the Venetian ambassador's house and obtain his support, in spite of my being in disfavour, which he could conceal, not knowing the reason for it. I determined to follow his advice and wrote to M. Dandolo, begging him to get the ambassador to favour me at the Spanish Court notwithstanding my quarrel with the Venetian Government. I worded my letter in such a way that it might be read by the Inquisitors themselves, and calculated on its producing a good impression.

After I had written this letter, I went to the lodging of the Venetian ambassador, and presented myself to the secretary, Gaspar Soderini, a worthy and intelligent man. Nevertheless, he dared to tell me that he was astonished at my hardihood in presenting myself at the embassy.

"I have presented myself, sir, that my enemies may never reproach me for not having done so; I am not aware that I have ever done anything which makes me too infamous to call on my ambassador. I should have charged myself with much greater hardihood if I had left Madrid without fulfilling this duty, but I shall be sorry if the ambassador views my proceedings in the same light as yourself and puts down to temerity what was meant for a mark of respect. I shall be none the less astonished if his excellency refuses to receive me on account of a private quarrel between myself and the State Inquisitors, of which he knows no more than I do, and I know nothing. You will excuse my saying that he is not the ambassador of the State Inquisitors but of the Republic of which I am a subject, for I defy him and I defy the Inquisitors to tell me what crime I have committed, that I am to be deprived of my rights as a Venetian citizen. I think that, while it is my duty to reverence my prince in the person of my ambassador, it is his duty to afford me his protection."

This speech had made Soderini blush and he replied, "Why don't you write a letter to the ambassador, with the arguments you have just used to me?"

"I could not write to him until I knew whether he would receive me or not. But now, as I have reason to suppose that his opinions are much the same as your own, I will certainly write to him."

"I do not know whether his excellency thinks as I do or not and, in spite of what I said to you, it is just possible that you do not know

my own opinions on the question; but write to him and he may possibly give you an audience."

"I shall follow your advice, for which I am much obliged."

When I got home, I wrote to his excellency all I had said to the secretary, and the next day I had a visit from Count Manucci. The count proved to be a fine-looking young man of agreeable presence. He said that he lived in the embassy, that his excellency had read my letter and, though he grieved not to receive me publicly, he would be delighted to see me in private, for he both knew and esteemed me.

Young Manucci told me he was a Venetian and knew me by name, as he had often heard his father and mother lamenting my misfortune. Before long it dawned upon me that this Count Manucci was the son of that Jean-Baptiste Manucci who had served as the spy of the State Inquisitors and had so adroitly managed to get possession of my books of magic, which were in all probability the chief *corpus delicti* which brought on me the horrible treatment I suffered.

I did not say anything to him but I was certain my guess was correct. His mother was the daughter of a *valet de chambre* and his father was a poor mechanic. I asked the young man if he was called "count" at the embassy and he said he bore the title by virtue of a warrant from the elector-palatine. My question showed him that I knew his origin and he began to speak openly to me and, knowing that I was acquainted with the peculiar tastes of M. de Mocenigo, the ambassador, he informed me laughingly that he was his pathic.

"I will do my best for you," he added, and I was glad to hear him say so, for an Alexis should be able to obtain almost anything from his Corydon. We embraced and he told me, as we parted, that he would expect me at the embassy in the afternoon, to take coffee in his room; the ambassador, he said, would certainly come in as soon as he heard of my presence.

I went to the embassy and had a very kind reception from the ambassador, who said he was deeply grieved not to be able to receive me publicly. He admitted that he could present me at Court without compromising himself, but he was afraid of making enemies.

"I hope soon to receive a letter from a friend of mine which, on behalf of the State Inquisitors, will authorise your excellency to produce me openly."

"I shall be delighted, in that case, to present you to all the ministers."

This Mocenigo was the same who acquired such a reputation in Paris by his leanings to pederasty, a vice or taste which the French hold in horror. Later on Mocenigo was condemned by the Council of Ten to ten years' imprisonment for having started on an embassy to Vienna without formal permission. Maria Theresa had intimated to the Venetian Government that she would not receive such a character, as his habits would be the scandal of her capital. The Venetian Government had some trouble with Mocenigo and, as he attempted to set out for Vienna, they exiled him and chose another ambassador, whose

morals were as bad, save that the new ambassador indulged himself with Hebe and not Ganymede, which threw a veil of decency over his proceedings

In spite of his reputation for pederasty, Mocenigo was much liked at Madrid. On one occasion I was at a ball and a Spaniard, noticing me with Manucci, came up and told me with an air of mystery that that young man was the ambassador's wife. He did not know that the ambassador was Manucci's wife; in fact, he did not understand the arrangement at all. "Where ignorance is bliss," etc! However, in spite of the revolting nature of this vice, it has been a favourite one with several great men. It was well known to the Ancients and those who indulged in it were called Hermaphrodites, which symbolises, not a man of two sexes, but a man with the passions of the two sexes.

I had called two or three times on the painter Mengs, who had been for six years painter-in-ordinary to His Catholic Majesty and had an excellent salary. He gave me some good dinners. His wife and family were in Rome, while he basked in the royal favours in Madrid, enjoying the unusual privilege of being able to speak to the King whenever he wished. At Mengs's house I made the acquaintance of the architect Sabatini, an extremely able man whom the King had summoned from Naples to cleanse Madrid, which was formerly the dirtiest and most stinking town in Europe or, for the matter of that, in the world. Sabatini had become a rich man by constructing drains, sewers and closets for a city of fourteen thousand houses. He had married by proxy the daughter of Vanvitelli, who was also an architect in Naples, but he had never seen her. She came to Madrid about the same time as myself. She was a beauty of eighteen and no sooner did she see her husband than she declared she would never be his wife. Sabatini was neither a young man nor a handsome one, but he was kind-hearted and distinguished and, when he told his young wife that she would have to choose between him and a nunnery, she determined to make the best of what she considered a bad bargain. However, she had no reason to repent of her choice; her husband was rich, affectionate and easy-going and gave her everything she wanted. I sighed and burned for her in silence, not daring to declare my love, for not only was the wound of Charlotte's death still bleeding, but I was also beginning to find that women were commencing to give me the cold shoulder.

By way of amusing myself, I began to go to the theatre, which was very near my dwelling, and to the masked balls, which the Count of Aranda had established in a room built for the purpose, named Los Escaños de Peral. A Spanish play is full of absurdities, but I rather relished the performances. The *autos sacramentales* were still represented; they were afterwards prohibited. I could not help remarking the strange way in which the boxes were constructed by order of the wretched police. Instead of being boarded in front, they are perfectly open, being held up by small pillars. A pious man once said to me at the theatre that this was a very wise regulation and he was surprised that it was not put in force in Italy.

"Why so?"

"Because lovers who feel sure that no one in the pit can see them may commit improprieties."

I answered only with a shrug of the shoulders.

In a large box opposite to the stage sat *los padres* of the Holy Inquisition, to watch over the morals of actors and audience. I was gazing on them when of a sudden the sentinel at the door of the pit called out "*Dios!*" and at this cry all the actors and all the audience, men and women, fell on their knees and remained kneeling till the sound of a bell in the street ceased to be heard. This bell betokened that a priest was passing by, carrying the *viaticum* to some sick man. I felt very much inclined to laugh, but I had seen enough of Spanish manners to refrain. All the religion of the Spaniard is in outward show and ceremony. A profligate woman, before yielding to the desires of her lover, covers the picture of Christ or the Virgin with a veil. If the lover laughed at this absurdity, he would run a risk of being denounced as an atheist and most probably by the wretched woman who had sold him her charms.

In Madrid, and possibly all over Spain, a gentleman who takes a lady to a private room in an inn must expect the waiter to be in the room the whole of the time, in order to swear that the couple took no indecent liberties with each other. In spite of all this wealth of precautions, profligacy is rampant in Madrid and also the most dreadful hypocrisy, which is more offensive to true piety than open sin. Men and women seem to have come to an agreement to set the whole system of surveillance utterly at naught. However, commerce with women is not without its dangers; whether it be endemic or a result of dirty habits, one has often good reasons to repent the favours one has obtained.

The masked ball quite captivated me. The first time, I went to see what it was like and it cost me only a doubloon (about eleven francs), but ever after it cost me four doubloons for the following reason.

An elderly gentleman who sat next me at supper guessed I was a foreigner by my difficulty in making myself understood by the waiter, and asked me where I had left my lady friend.

"I have none; I came by myself to enjoy this delightful and excellently managed entertainment."

"Yes, but you ought to come with a companion; then you could dance. At present, you cannot do so, as every lady has her partner, who will not allow her to dance with anyone else."

"Then I must be content not to dance, for, being a foreigner, I do not know any lady whom I can ask to come with me."

"As a foreigner, you would have much less difficulty securing a partner than would a citizen of Madrid. Under the new fashion introduced by the Count of Aranda the masked ball has become the rage of all the women in the capital. You see, there are about two hundred of them on the floor to-night; well, I should think there are at least four thousand girls in Madrid who are sighing for someone to take

them to the ball, for, as you may know, no woman is allowed to come by herself. You would only have to go to any respectable people, give your name and address and ask to have the pleasure of taking their daughter to the ball. You would have to send her a domino, mask and gloves and you would take her and bring her back in your carriage."

"And if the father and mother refused?"

"Then you would make your bow and go, leaving them to repent of their folly, for the girl would sigh, and weep, and moan, bewail parental tyranny, call Heaven to witness the innocence of going to a ball and finally go into convulsions."

This speech, which was uttered in the most persuasive style, made me quite gay, for I scented an intrigue from afar. I thanked the masker (who spoke Italian very well) and promised to follow his advice and let him know the results.

"I shall be delighted to hear of your success and you will find me in the box where I shall be glad if you will follow me now, to be introduced to the lady who is my constant companion."

I was astonished at so much politeness and told him my name and followed him. He took me into a box where there were two ladies and an elderly man. They were talking about the ball, so I put in a remark or two on the same topic, which seemed to meet with approval. One of the two ladies, who retained some traces of her former beauty, asked me in excellent French what circles I moved in.

"I have been only a short time in Madrid and, not having been presented at Court, I really know no one."

"Really! I quite pity you. Come to see me; you will be welcome. My name is Pichona and anybody will tell you where I live."

"I shall be delighted to pay my respects to you, madame."

What I liked best about the spectacle was a wonderful and fantastic dance which was struck up at midnight. It was the famous *fandango*, of which I had often heard but of which I had absolutely no idea. I had seen it danced on the stage in France and Italy, but the actors were careful not to use those voluptuous gestures which make it the most seductive in the world. It cannot be described. Each couple dances only three steps, but the gestures and the attitudes are the most lascivious imaginable. Everything is represented, from the sigh of desire to the final ecstasy; it is a very history of Love. I could not conceive a woman refusing her partner anything after this dance, for it seemed made to stir up the senses. I was so excited at this Bacchanalian spectacle that I burst into cries of delight. The masker who had taken me to his box told me I should see the *fandango* danced by the *gitanas* with good partners.

"But," I remarked, "does not the Inquisition object to this dance?"

Madame Pichona told me it was absolutely forbidden and that they would not dare dance it if the Count of Aranda had not given permission.

I heard afterwards that, when the count forbade the *fandango*, the

ballroom was deserted, with bitter complaints, and, on the prohibition being withdrawn, everyone was loud in his praise.

The next day I told my infamous page to get me a Spaniard who would teach me the *fandango*. He brought me an actor, who also gave me Spanish lessons, for he pronounced the language admirably. In the course of three days the young actor taught me all the steps so well that, by the confession of the Spaniards themselves, I danced it to perfection.

For the next ball I determined to carry the master's advice into effect, but I did not want to take a courtesan or a married woman with me and I could not reasonably expect that any young lady of family would accompany me.

It was St. Anthony's Day and, passing the Church of the Soledad, I went in, with the double motive of hearing mass and of procuring a partner for the next day's ball.

I noticed a fine-looking girl coming out of the confessional with contrite face and lowered eyes and I noted where she went. She knelt down in the middle of the church on the ground, after the Spanish custom. By her easy, swinging gait, her well developed form and her small foot, I judged that she must dance the *fandango* like a *gitana*, and I registered a mental vow to the effect that she should be my first partner. She did not look a person of position nor, so far as I could see, was she rich, and nothing about her indicated the courtesan, though women of that class go to confession in Madrid, like everybody else. When mass was ended and the priest distributed the Eucharist, I saw her rise and approach humbly to the holy table and there receive the communion, after which she withdrew to complete her devotions. I had the patience to wait until they were over.

At last she left in company with another girl and I followed at a distance. At the end of a street her companion left her to go into her house and she, retracing her steps, turned into another street and entered a small house, one story high. I noted the house and the street (Calle del Desengaño) and then walked up and down for half an hour, so that I might not be suspected of having followed her. At last I took courage and walked in and, on my ringing a bell, I heard a voice, "Who is there?"

"Honest folk," I answered, according to the custom of the country; and the door was opened. I found myself in the presence of a man, a woman, the young devotee I had followed and another girl, who was ugly.

My Spanish was bad but still good enough to express my meaning. In a modest tone and hat in hand, I told the father that, being a stranger, wishing to go to the ball and having no partner, I had come to ask him to give me his daughter for my partner, supposing he had a daughter. I assured him that I was a man of honour and that the girl would be returned to him after the ball in the same condition as when she started.

"Señor," said he, "there is my daughter, but I don't know you and don't know whether she wants to go."

"I should like to go if my parents will allow me."

"Then you know this gentleman?"

"I have never seen him and I suppose he has never seen me."

"You speak the truth, señora."

The father asked my name and address and promised I should have a decisive answer by dinner-time, if I dined at home. I begged him to excuse the liberty I had taken and to let me know his answer without fail, so that I might have time to get another partner if it were unfavourable to me.

Just as I was beginning to dine, my man appeared. I asked him to sit down and he informed me that his daughter would accept my offer, but that her mother would accompany her and sleep in the carriage. I said that she might do so if she liked, but I should be sorry for her on account of the cold.

"She will have a good cloak," said he. And he proceeded to inform me that he was a cordwainer.

"Then I hope you will take my measure for a pair of shoes."

"I daren't do that; I'm an *hidalgo* and, if I were to take anyone's measure, I would have to touch his foot and that would be a degradation. I am a cobbler, which is not inconsistent with my nobility."

"Then will you mend these boots?"

"I will make them like new; but I see they need a lot of work; it will cost you a *pezzo duro*." (About five francs.)

I told him I thought his terms very reasonable and he went out with a profound bow, refusing absolutely to dine with me.

Here was a cobbler who despised bootmakers because they had to touch the foot, and they no doubt despised him because he touched old leather. Unfortunate pride! How many forms it assumes! And who is without his own peculiar form of it?

The next day I sent to the gentleman-cobbler's a tradesman with dominos, masks and gloves; but I took care not to go myself nor to send my page, for whom I had an aversion which amounted almost to a presentiment. I hired a carriage to seat four and at nightfall I drove to the house of my pious partner, who was quite ready for me. The happy flush on her face was a sufficient index to me of the feelings of her heart. We got into the carriage with the mother, who was wrapped up in a vast cloak, and at the door of the dancing-room we descended, leaving the mother in the carriage. As soon as we were alone, my fair partner told me her name was Donna Ignazia.

CHAPTER 125

WE entered the ballroom and walked round several times. Donna Ignazia was in such a state of ecstasy that I felt her tremblings and augured well for my amorous projects. Though liberty, nay, licence,

seemed to reign supreme, there was a guard of soldiers ready to arrest the first person who created any disturbance. We danced several minuets and square dances and at ten o'clock we went to the supper-room, our conversation being very limited all the while, she not speaking for fear of encouraging me too much and I, on account of my poor knowledge of the Spanish language. I left her alone for a moment after supper and went to the box, where I expected to find Madame Pichona, but it was occupied by maskers unknown to me, so I rejoined my partner and we went on dancing the minuets and quadrilles till the *fandango* was announced. I took my place with my partner, who danced it admirably and seemed astonished to find herself so well supported by a foreigner. This dance had excited both of us, so, after taking her to the buffet and giving her the best wines and liqueurs procurable, I asked her if she were content with me. I added that I was deeply in love with her and that, unless she found some means of making me happy, I should undoubtedly die of love. I assured her I was ready to face all hazards.

"By making you happy," she replied, "I shall make myself happy, too. I will write you to-morrow and you will find the letter sewn into the hood of my domino."

"You will find me ready to do anything, fair Ignazia, if you will give me hope."

At last the ball was over and we went out and got into the carriage. The mother woke up and the coachman drove off and I, taking the girl's hands, would have kissed them. However, she seemed to suspect that I had other intentions and held my hands clasped so tightly that I believe I should have found it a hard task to pull them away. In this position Donna Ignazia proceeded to tell her mother all about the ball and the delight it had given her. She did not let go my hands till we got to the corner of their street, when the mother called out to the coachman to stop, not wishing to give her neighbours occasion for slander by stopping in front of their own house.

The next day I sent for the domino and in it I found a letter from Donna Ignazia, in which she told me that a Don Francisco de Ramos would call on me, that he was her lover and that he would inform me how to render her and myself happy.

Don Francisco wasted no time, for the next morning at eight o'clock my page sent in his name. He told me that Donna Ignazia, with whom he talked every night, she being at her window and he in the street, had informed him that she and I had been to the ball together. She had also told him that she felt sure I had conceived a fatherly affection for her, and she had consequently prevailed upon him to call on me, being certain that I would treat him as my own son. She had encouraged him to ask me to lend him a hundred doubloons, which would enable them to get married before the end of the carnival.

"I am employed at the Mint," he added, "but my present salary is a very small one. I hope I shall get an increase before long and then I shall be in a position to make Ignazia happy. All my relatives live

in Toledo and I have no friends in Madrid, so, when we set up, our only friends will be my wife's father and mother and yourself, for I am sure you love her like a daughter."

"You have probed my heart to its core," I replied, "but just now I am awaiting remittances and have very little money about me. You may count on my discretion and I shall be delighted to see you whenever you care to call on me."

The gallant made me a bow and took his departure in no good humour. Don Francisco was a young man of twenty-two, ugly and ill-made. I resolved to nip the intrigue in the bud, for my inclination for Donna Ignazia was of the lightest description; and I went to call on Madame Pichona, who had given me such a polite invitation to come to see her. I had made inquiries about her and had found out that she was an actress and had been made rich by the Duke of Medina-Celi. The duke had paid her a visit in very cold weather and, finding her without a fire, as she was too poor to buy coals, had sent her the next day a silver stove, which he had filled with a hundred thousand *pezzos duros* in gold, amounting to three hundred thousand francs in French money. Since then Madame Pichona lived at her ease and received good company.

She gave me a warm reception when I called on her, but her looks were sad. I began by saying that, as I had not found her in her box on the last ball night, I had ventured to come to inquire after her health.

"I did not go," said she, "for on that day died my only friend, the Duke of Medina-Celi. He was ill for three days."

"I sympathise with you. Was the duke an old man?"

"Hardly sixty. You saw him; he did not look his age."

"Where did I see him?"

"Did he not bring you to my box?"

"You don't say so! He did not tell me his name and I had never seen him before."

I was grieved to hear of his death; it was, in all probability, a misfortune for me, as well as for Madame Pichona. All the duke's estate passed to a son of miserly disposition, who, in his turn, had a son who was beginning to evince the utmost extravagance.

I was told that the family of Medina-Celi enjoys thirty titles of nobility.

One day, a young man called on me, to offer me, as a foreigner, his services in a country which he knew thoroughly.

"I am Count Marazzani de Plaisance," he began. "I am not rich and have come to Madrid to try to make my fortune. I hope to enter the bodyguard of His Catholic Majesty. I have been indulging in the amusements of the town ever since I came. I saw you at the ball with an unknown beauty. I don't ask you to tell me her name but, if you are fond of novelty, I can introduce you to all the handsomest girls in Madrid."

If my experience had taught me such wholesome lessons as I might

and that she had no hope ever to go again, as I had doubtless found someone else more worthy of my attentions.

"I have not found anyone worthy to be preferred to you," I replied, "and, if you would like to go to the ball again, I should be most happy to take you."

The father and mother were delighted with the pleasure I was about to give their beloved daughter. As the ball was to take place the same evening, I gave the mother a doubloon to get a mask and domino. She went on the errand and, as Don Diego also set out on some business, I found myself alone with the girl. I took the opportunity of telling her that, if she willed, I would be hers, as I adored her, but that I could not sigh for long.

"What can you ask and what can I offer, since I must keep myself pure for my husband?"

"You should abandon yourself to me without reserve and you may be sure that I will respect your innocence."

I then proceeded to make advances, which she repulsed with a serious face. I stopped directly, telling her that she would find me polite and respectful but not in the least affectionate for the rest of the evening.

Her face had blushed a vivid scarlet, and she replied that her sense of duty obliged her to repulse me in spite of herself.

I liked this metaphysical line of argument. I saw that I had only to destroy the idea of duty in her and all the rest would follow. What I had to do was to enter into an argument and sweep her off her feet directly I saw her at a loss for an answer.

"If your duty," I began, "forces you to repulse me in spite of yourself, your duty is a burden on you. If it is a burden on you, it is your enemy and, if it is your enemy, why do you suffer it thus lightly to gain the victory? If you were your own friend, you would at once expel this insolent enemy from your coasts."

"That may not be."

"Yes, it may. Only shut your eyes."

"Like that."

"Yes."

I caressed her immediately; she repulsed me, but more gently and not so seriously as before.

"You may, of course, seduce me," she said, "but, if you really love me, you will spare me the shame."

"Dearest Ignazia, there is no shame in a girl giving herself up to the man she loves. Love justifies all things. If you do not love me, I ask nothing of you."

"But how shall I convince you that I am actuated by love and not by complaisance?"

"Allow me to do what I like and my self-esteem will help me to believe you."

"But, as I cannot be certain that you will believe me, my duty plainly points to a refusal."

"Very well, but you will make me sad and cold."

"Then I shall be sad, too."

At these encouraging words I embraced her. She made no opposition, and I was well pleased with what I had got; for a first attempt, I could not well expect more.

At this juncture, the mother came in with the domino and gloves. I refused to accept the change and went away to return in my carriage, as before.

Thus the first step had been taken and Donna Ignazia felt it would be ridiculous not to fall in with my conversations at the ball, which were all aimed at procuring the pleasure of spending our nights together. She found me affectionate all evening and at supper I did my best to get her everything she liked. I showed her that the part she had at last taken was worthy of praise, not blame. I filled her pockets with sweets and put into my own pockets two bottles of *ratafia*, which I handed over to the mother, who was asleep in the carriage. Donna Ignazia gratefully refused the *quadruple* I wished to give her, saying that, if it were in my power to make such presents, I might give the money to her lover whenever he called on me.

"Certainly," I answered, "but what shall I say to prevent his taking offence?"

"Tell him that it is on account of the loan he asked of you. He is poor and I am sure he is in despair at not seeing me in the window to-night. I shall tell him I went to the ball with you only to please my father."

Donna Ignazia, a mixture of voluptuousness and piety, like most Spanish women, danced the *fandango* with so much fire that no words could have expressed so well the joys that were in store for me. What a dance it is! It sweeps you off your feet and sets your blood afire. And yet they tried to tell me that most men and women who dance it see no hidden significance in it. I pretended to believe them.

Before getting out of the carriage, Ignazia begged me to come to mass at the Church of the Soledad the next day at eight o'clock. I had not yet told her that it was there I had seen her first. She also asked me to come and see her in the evening and said she would send me a letter if we were not left alone together.

I slept till noon and was waked by Marazzani, who came to ask me to give him some dinner. He told me he had seen me with my fair companion the night before and had vainly endeavoured to find out who she was. I bore with this singularly misplaced curiosity but, when it came to his saying that he would have followed us if he had had any money, I spoke to him in a manner that made him turn pale. He begged pardon and promised to bridle his curiosity in future. He proposed a party of pleasure with the famous courtesan Spiletta, whose favours were dear, but I declined, for my mind was taken up with the fair Ignazia, whom I considered a worthy successor to Charlotte.

I went to the church and she saw me when she came in, followed by the same companion as before.

She knelt down two or three paces from me but did not once look in my direction. Her friend, on the other hand, inspected me closely; she seemed about the same age as Ignazia, but she was ugly. Having noticed Don Francisco, I went out of the church before the damsel; my rival followed me and congratulated me somewhat bitterly on my good fortune in having taken his mistress a second time to the ball. He confessed that he had been on our track the whole evening and that he would have gone away well enough pleased if it had not been for the way in which we danced the *fandango*. "For," said he, "it struck me that you had too much the air of unhappy lovers." I felt this was an occasion for a little gentle management and I answered good-humouredly that the love he thought he noticed was wholly imaginary and that he was wrong to entertain any suspicions as to so virtuous a girl as Donna Ignazia. At the same time, I placed a gold ounce in his hand, begging him to take it on account. He did so with an astonished stare and, calling me his father and guardian angel, swore eternal gratitude.

In the evening I called on Don Diego, where I was regaled with the excellent *ratafia* I had given the mother, and the whole family began to speak of the obligations Spain owed to the Count of Aranda.

"No exercise is more healthful than dancing," said Antonia, the mother, "and until now balls were strictly forbidden. In spite of that, he is hated for having expelled *los padres de la Compañia de Jesús* and for his sumptuary regulations. But the poor bless his name, for all the money produced by the balls goes to them."

"And thus," said the father, "to go to the ball is to do a pious work."

"I have two cousins," said Ignazia, "who are perfect angels of goodness. I told them you had taken me to the ball, but they are so poor that they have no hope of going. If you want to, you can make them quite happy by taking them on the last day of the carnival. The ball closes at midnight, so as not to profane Ash Wednesday."

"I shall be happy to oblige you, all the more so as your worthy mother will not be obliged to wait for us in the carriage."

"You are very kind; but I shall have to introduce you to my aunt; she is so particular. When she knows you, I am sure she will consent, for you have all the air of discretion. Go and see her to-day; she lives in the next street; over her door you will see a notice that lace is washed within. Tell her that my mother gave you the address. To-morrow morning after mass I will see to everything else and you must come here at noon to arrange for our meeting on the last day of the carnival."

I did all this and the next day I heard that it was settled.

"I will have the dominos ready at my house," I said, "and you must come in at the back door. We will dine in my room and go to the ball. The eldest of your cousins must be disguised as a man."

"I won't tell her anything about that, for fear she might think it

a sin, but, once in your house, you will have no difficulty in managing her."

The younger of the two cousins was ugly but looked like a woman, whereas the elder looked like an ugly man dressed in woman's clothes. She made an amusing contrast to Donna Ignazia, who looked most seductive when she laid aside her air of piety.

I took care that everything requisite for our disguises should be at hand in a neighbouring closet, unbeknown to my rascally page. I gave him a piece of money in the morning and told him to spend the last day of the carnival according to his own taste, as I would not require his services till noon the day after.

I ordered a good dinner and the waiter from the tavern to serve it and got rid of Marazzani by giving him a doubloon. I took great pains over the entertainment I was to give the two cousins and the fair Ignazia, whom I hoped that day to make my mistress. It was all quite a novelty for me; I had to do with three pious girls, two hideous and the third ravishingly beautiful, who had already had a foretaste of the joys in store for her.

They came at noon and for an hour I discoursed to them in a moral and unctuous manner. I had taken care to provide myself with some excellent wine, which did not fail to take effect on the three girls, who were not accustomed to a dinner that lasted two hours. They were not exactly inebriated, but their spirits were worked up to a pitch they had never attained before.

I told the elder cousin, who was perhaps twenty-five years old, that I was going to disguise her as a man; consternation appeared on her features, but I had expected as much and Donna Ignazia told her she was only too lucky and her sister observed that she did not think it could be a sin.

"If it were a sin," said I, "do not suppose that I would have suggested it to your virtuous sister."

Donna Ignazia, who knew the *Legendarium* by heart, corroborated my assertion by saying that the blessed Santa Marina had passed her whole life in man's clothes and this settled the matter.

I then burst into a very high-flown eulogium of her intellectual capacity, so as to enlist her vanity in the good cause.

"Come with me," said I, "and do you ladies wait here; I want to enjoy your surprise when you see her in man's clothes."

The ugly cousin made a supreme effort and followed me and, when she had duly inspected her disguise, I told her to take off her boots and put on white stockings and shoes, of which I had provided several pairs. I sat down before her and told her that, if she suspected me of any dishonourable intentions, she would commit a mortal sin, as I was old enough to be her father. She replied that she was a good Christian but not a fool. I fastened her garters for her, saying that I would never have supposed she had so well shapen and so white a leg, which compliment made her smile in a satisfied manner.

Although I had a fine view of her thighs, I observed no traces of a

blush on her face. I then gave her a pair of my breeches, which fitted her admirably, though I was five inches taller than she, but this difference was compensated by the posterior proportions, where, like most women, she was bountifully endowed. I turned away to let her put them on in freedom and, having given her a linen shirt, she told me she had finished before she had buttoned it at the neck. There may possibly have been a little coquetry in this, as I buttoned the shirt for her and was thus gratified with a sight of her splendid bosom. I will not say whether she was pleased or not at my refraining from complimenting her upon her fine proportions. When her toilette was finished, I surveyed her from head to foot and pronounced her to be a perfect man, with the exception of one blemish.

"I am sorry for that."

"Will you allow me to arrange your shirt so as to obviate it?"

"I shall be much obliged, as I have never dressed in man's clothes before."

I then sat down in front of her and arranged the shirt in a proper manner. I allowed myself some small liberties, but I toyed with such a serious air that she seemed to take it all as a matter of course.

When I had put on her domino and mask, I led her forth and her sister and Donna Ignazia congratulated me on her disguise, saying that anybody would take her for a man.

"Now it's your turn," I said to the younger one.

"Go with him," said the elder. "Don Jaime is as honourable a man as you will find in Spain."

There was really not much to be done to the younger sister, her disguise being simply a mask and domino, but, as I wanted to keep Ignazia a long time, I made her put on white stockings, change her kerchief and a dozen other trifles. When she was ready, I brought her forth and Donna Ignazia, noticing that she had changed her stockings and kerchief, asked her whether I was as expert at dressing a lady as at turning a lady into a gentleman.

"I don't know," she replied. "I did everything for myself."

Next came the turn of Don Diego's daughter and, as soon as I had her in the inner room, I held her for half an hour in my arms. When decency made us leave the room she remarked to her cousins, "I thought I would never have done; I had to alter the whole fit of the domino." I admired her presence of mind.

At nightfall we went to the ball, at which the *fandango* might be danced *ad libitum*, by a special privilege, but the crowd was so great that dancing was out of the question. At ten we had supper and then walked up and down, till all at once the two orchestras became silent. We heard the church clocks striking midnight—the carnival was over and Lent had begun.

This rapid transition from wantonness to piety, from paganism to Christianity, has something startling and unnatural about it. At fifty-nine minutes past eleven the senses are all aglow; midnight sounds

and in a minute they are supposed to be brought low and the heart to be full of humble repentance; it is an absurdity, an impossibility.

I took the three girls to my house to take off their dominos and then we escorted the two cousins home. When we had gone a few steps further, Donna Ignazia told me she would like a little coffee. I understood her and took her to my house, feeling sure of two hours of mutual pleasure.

I took her to my room and was just going out to order the coffee when I met Don Francisco, who asked me plainly to let him come up, as he had seen Donna Ignazia go in with me. I had sufficient strength of mind to conceal my rage and disappointment and told him to come in, adding that his mistress would be delighted at this unexpected visit. I went upstairs and he followed me and I showed him into the room, congratulating the lady on the pleasant surprise.

I expected she would play her part as well as I had played mine, but I was wrong. In her rage she told him she would never have asked me to give her a cup of coffee if she had foreseen this piece of importunity, adding that, if he had been a gentleman, he would have known better than to intrude at such an hour.

In spite of my anger, I felt I must take the poor devil's part; he looked like a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail. I tried to calm Donna Ignazia, telling her that Don Francisco had seen us by a mere accident and that it was I who had asked him to come upstairs, in the hope of pleasing her.

Donna Ignazia feigned to be persuaded and asked her lover to sit down, but she did not speak another word to him, confining her remarks to me, saying how much she had enjoyed the ball and how kind I had been to take her cousins.

After he had taken a cup of coffee, Don Francisco bade us good night. I told him I hoped he would come and see me before Lent was over, but Donna Ignazia only vouchsafed him a slight nod. When he had gone, she said, sadly enough, that she was sorry he had deprived us both of our pleasure and that she was sure he was still hanging about the place and she dared not expose herself to his vengeance. "So take me home but, if you love me, come to see me again. The trick the stupid fellow has played me shall cost him dear. Are you now sure I don't love him?"

"Quite certain, for you love me too well to love anybody else."

Donna Ignazia gave me a hasty proof of her affection and I escorted her home, assuring her that she would be the sole object of my thoughts as long as I stayed in Madrid.

The next day I dined with Mengs and the day after that I was accosted in the street by an ill-looking fellow, who bade me follow him to a cloister, as he had something of importance to communicate to me.

As soon as he saw that we were unobserved, he told me that the *alcalde* Messa was going to pay me a visit that same night with a band of police, "of whom," he added, "I am one. He knows you have

concealed weapons in your room. He knows, or thinks he knows, certain other things which authorise him to seize your person and take you to the prison where persons destined for the galleys are kept. I give you this warning because I believe you to be a man of honour. Despire not my advice, but look to yourself and get into some place of security.'

I credited what he told me, as the circumstance of my having arms was perfectly true, so I gave the man a doubloon and, instead of calling on Donna Ignazia, as I had intended, I went back to my lodging and, after putting my weapons under my cloak, went to Mengs's, leaving word at the café to send my page as soon as he came back. I was safe in Mengs's house as it belonged to the King.

The painter was an honest fellow but proud and suspicious to an excess. He did not refuse me an asylum for the night but told me I must look out for some other refuge, as the *alcalde* must have some other accusation against me and, knowing nothing of the merits or demerits of the case, he could not take any part in it. He gave me a room and we supped together, discussing the matter all the time, I persisting that the possession of arms was my only offence and he replying that, if it were so, I should have awaited the *alcalde* fearlessly, as it stood to reason that a man had a right to keep defensive weapons in his own room. To this I answered that I had come to him only to avoid passing the night in prison, as I was certain the man had told me the truth.

"To-morrow I shall look for another lodging."

I confessed, however, that it would have been wiser for me to leave my pistols and musket in my room.

"Yes, and you might have remained there yourself. I did not think you were so easily frightened."

As we were arguing it over, my landlord came and said that the *alcalde* with thirty constables had been to my apartment and had broken open the door. He had searched everything, but unsuccessfully, and had gone away after sealing the room and its contents. He had arrested and imprisoned my page on the charge of having warned me. "For otherwise," he said, "the Venetian gentleman would never have gone to the house of Chevalier Mengs, where he is out of my power."

At this, Mengs agreed that I had been right in believing my informant's tale, and he added that, the first thing in the morning, I should go and protest my innocence before the Count of Aranda, but he especially urged on me the duty of defending the poor page. My landlord went his way and we continued the discussion, Mengs insisting on the page's innocence, till at last I lost all patience and said:

"My page must be a thorough-paced scoundrel; the magistrate's arresting him for warning me is an absolute proof that he knew of my approaching arrest. What is a servant who does not warn his master under such circumstances but a rascal? Indeed, I am absolutely certain that he was the informer, for he was the only person who knew where the arms were concealed."

Mengs could find no answer to this and left to go to bed. I did the same and passed an excellent night.

Early the next morning, the great Mengs sent me linen and all the requisites of the toilette. His maid brought me a cup of chocolate and his cook came to ask if I had permission to eat flesh-meat. In such ways a prince welcomes a guest and bids him stay, but such behaviour in a private person is equivalent to a hint to go. I expressed my gratitude but accepted only a cup of chocolate and one handkerchief.

My carriage was at the door and I was just taking leave of Mengs when an officer appeared on the scene and asked the pianter if the Chevalier de Casanova was in the house.

"I am the Chevalier de Casanova," said I.

"Then I hope you will follow me of your own free will to the prison of Buen Retiro. I cannot use force here, for this house is the King's, but I warn you that in less than an hour the Chevalier Mengs will have orders to turn you out and then you will be dragged to prison, which would be unpleasant for you. I therefore advise you to follow me quietly and to give up such weapons as you may possess."

"The Chevalier Mengs will give you the weapons in question. I have carried them with me for eleven years; they are meant to protect me on the highways. I am ready to follow you, but first allow me to write four notes; I shall not be half an hour"

"I can allow you neither to wait nor to write, but you will be at liberty to do so after you have reached the prison."

"Very well; then I am ready to follow you, for I have no choice. I shall remember Spanish justice!"

I embraced Mengs, had the weapons put into my carriage and got in with the officer, who seemed a perfect gentleman.

He took me to the Castle of Buen Retiro, formerly a royal palace and now a prison. When my conductor had consigned me to the officer of the watch, I was handed over to a corporal, who led me into a vast hall on the ground floor of the building. The stench was dreadful and the prisoners were about thirty, ten of them being soldiers. There were ten or twelve large beds, some benches, no table and no chairs.

I asked the guard to get me some pens, ink and paper and gave him a *duro* for the purpose. He took the coin smilingly and went away but did not return. When I asked his brethren what had become of him, they laughed in my face. But what surprised me most was the sight of my page and Marazzani, who told me in Italian that he had been there for three days and that he had not written to me, as he had a presentiment that we should soon meet. He added that in a fortnight's time we would be sent off under a heavy escort to work in some fortress, though we might send our pleas to the Government and might possibly be let out after three or four years' imprisonment.

"I hope," he said, "not to be condemned before I am heard. The *alcalde* will come and interrogate you to-morrow and your answers will be taken down; that's all. You may then be sent to hard labour in Africa."

"Has your case been heard yet?"

"They were at me about it for three hours yesterday."

"What kind of questions did they ask you?"

"They wished to know what banker furnished me with money for my expenses. I told them I had no banker and that I lived by borrowing from my friends, in the expectation of becoming one of the King's bodyguard. They then asked me how it was that the Parmese ambassador knew nothing about me, and I replied that I had never been presented to him. 'Without the favour of your ambassador,' they objected, 'you could never join the royal guard, and you must be aware of that, but the King will give you an employment where you will stand in need of no recommendation.' And so the *alcalde* left me. If the Venetian ambassador does not interpose in your behalf, you will be treated in the same way."

I concealed my rage and sat down on a bed, which I left after three hours, as I found myself covered with the disgusting vermin which seem endemic in Spain. The very sight of them made me sick. I stood upright, motionless and silent, devouring the bile which consumed me.

There was no good in talking; I must write; but where was I to find writing materials? However, I resolved to wait in silence; my time must come, sooner or later.

At noon, Marazzani told me that he knew a soldier for whose trustworthiness he would answer and who would get me my dinner if I gave him the money.

"I have no appetite," I replied, "and I am not going to give a farthing to anyone till the stolen *duro* is restored to me."

He made an uproar over this piece of cheating, but the soldiers only laughed at him. My page then asked him to intercede with me, as he was hungry and had no money wherewith to buy food.

"I will not give him a farthing; he is no longer in my service and would to God I had never seen him!"

My companions in misery proceeded to dine on bad garlic soup and wretched bread, washed down by plain water—excepting two priests and an individual who was styled *corregidor*, who fared very well.

At four o'clock one of Mengs's servants brought me a dinner which would have sufficed for four. He wanted to leave me the dinner and come for the plates in the evening but, not caring to share the meal with the vile mob around me, I told him to wait till I had done and to come again at the same time the next day, as I did not require any supper. The servant obeyed. Marazzani said rudely that I might at least have kept the bottle of wine; but I gave him no answer.

At five o'clock Manucci appeared, accompanied by a Spanish officer. After the usual compliments had passed between us, I asked the officer if I might write to my friends, who would not allow me to stay much longer in prison if they were advised of my arrest.

"We are no tyrants," he replied. "You may write what letters you like."

"Then," said I, "as this is a free country, is it allowable for a soldier,

who has received certain moneys to buy certain articles, to pocket the money and appropriate it to his own use?"

"What is his name?"

The guard had been relieved and no one seemed to know who or where he was.

"I promise you, sir," said the officer, "that the soldier shall be punished and your money restored to you; and, in the meanwhile, you shall have pens, ink, paper, a table and a candle immediately."

"And I," added Manucci, "promise you that one of the ambassador's servants will wait on you at eight o'clock to deliver any letters you may write."

I took three crowns from my pocket and told my fellow prisoners that the first to name the soldier who had deceived me should have the money; Marazzani was the first to do so. The officer made a note of the man's name with a smile; he was beginning to know me; I had spent three crowns to get back one and could not be very avaricious.

Manucci whispered to me that the ambassador would do his best in a confidential way to get my release and that he had no doubt of his success.

When my visitors were gone, I sat down to write but I had need of all my patience. The rascally prisoners crowded round me to read what I was writing and, when they could not understand it, they were impudent enough to ask me to explain it to them. Under the pretext of snuffing the candle they put it out. However, I bore with it all. One of the soldiers said he would keep them quiet for a crown, but I gave him no answer. In spite of the hell around me, I finished my letters and sealed them up. They were no studied or rhetorical epistles but merely the expression of the fury with which I was consumed.

I told Mocenigo that it was his duty to defend a subject of his prince who had been arrested and imprisoned by a foreign power on an idle pretext. I showed him that he must give me his protection unless I was guilty, and that I had committed no offence against the law of the land. I reminded him that I was a Venetian, in spite of my persecution at the hands of the State Inquisitors, and that, being a Venetian, I had a right to count on his protection.

To Don Manuel de Roda, a learned scholar and the Minister of Justice, I wrote that I did not ask any favour but only simple justice.

"Serve God and your master," said I. "Let His Catholic Majesty save me from the hands of the infamous *alcalde* who has arrested me, an honest and law-abiding man who came to Spain trusting in his own innocence and the protection of the laws. The person who writes to you, my lord, has a purse full of doubloons in his pocket; he has already been robbed and fears assassination in the filthy den in which he has been imprisoned."

I wrote to the Duke of Lossada, requesting him to inform the King that his servants had subjected to vile treatment a man whose only fault was that he had a little money. I begged him to use his influence with His Catholic Majesty to put a stop to these infamous proceedings

But the most vigorous letter of all was the one I addressed to the Count of Aranda. I told him plainly that, if this infamous action went on, I should be forced to believe that it was by his orders, since I had stated in vain that I came to Madrid with an introduction to him from a princess.

"I have committed no crime," I said. "What compensation am I to have when I am released from this filthy and abominable place? Set me at liberty at once or tell your hangmen to finish their work, for I warn you that no one shall take me to the galleys alive."

According to my custom, I took copies of all the letters and then sent them off by the servant whom the all-powerful Manucci sent to the prison. I passed such a night as Dante might have imagined in his *Vision of Hell*. All the beds were full and, even if there had been a spare place, I would not have occupied it. I asked in vain for a mattress but, even if they had brought me one, it would have been of no use, for the whole floor was inundated. There were only two or three chamber utensils for all the prisoners and everyone discharged his occasions on the floor.

I spent the night on a narrow bench without a back, resting my head on my hands.

At seven o'clock the next morning Manucci came to see me; I looked upon him as my Providence. I begged him to take me down to the guardroom and give me some refreshment, for I felt quite exhausted. My request was granted and, as I told my sufferings, I had my hair done by a barber.

Manucci told me my letters would be delivered in the course of the day, and remarked smilingly that my epistle to the ambassador was rather severe. I showed him copies of the three others I had written and the inexperienced young man told me that gentleness was the best way to obtain favours. He did not know that there are circumstances in which a man's pen must be dipped in gall. He told me confidentially that the ambassador was dining with Aranda that day and would speak in my favour as a private individual, adding that he was afraid my letter would prejudice the proud Spaniard against me.

"All I ask of you," said I, "is not to tell the ambassador that you have seen the letter I wrote to the Count of Aranda."

He promised he would keep the secret.

An hour after his departure, I saw Donna Ignazia and her father coming in, accompanied by the officer who had treated me with such consideration. Their visit cut me to the quick; nevertheless, I felt grateful, for it showed me the goodness of Don Diego's heart and the love of the fair devotee.

I gave them to understand in my bad Spanish that I was grateful for the honour they had done me in visiting me in this dreadful situation. Donna Ignazia did not speak, she only wept in silence; but Don Diego gave me clearly to understand that he would never have come to see me if he had not felt certain that my accusation was a mistake

or an infamous calumny. He told me he was sure I would be set free and that proper satisfaction would be given me.

"I hope so," I replied, "for I am perfectly innocent of any offence."

I was greatly touched when the worthy man slipped into my hands a *rouleau*, telling me it contained twelve *quadruples*, which I could repay at my convenience. This was more than a thousand francs and my hair stood on end. I pressed his hand warmly and whispered to him that I had fifty in my pocket, which I was afraid to show him, for fear the rascals around might rob me. He put back his *rouleau* and bade me farewell in tears and I promised to come to see him as soon as I should be set at liberty.

He had not sent in his name and, as he was very well dressed, he was taken for a man of importance. Such characters are not altogether exceptional in heroic Spain; it is a land of extremes.

At noon Mengs's servant came with a dinner that was choicer than before, but not so plentiful. This was just what I wished. He waited for me to finish and went away with the plates, carrying my heartiest thanks to his master.

At one o'clock an individual came up to me and bade me follow him. He took me to a small room, where I saw my carbine and pistols. In front of me was the *alcalde* Messa, seated at a table covered with documents, and a policeman stood at each side of him. The *alcalde* told me to sit down and answer truly such questions as might be put to me, warning me that my replies would be taken down.

"I do not understand Spanish well and I shall give only written answers to any questions that may be asked of me in Italian, French or Latin."

This reply, which I uttered in a firm and determined voice, seemed to astonish him. He spoke to me for an hour and I understood him very well, but he got only one reply:

"I don't understand what you say. Get a judge who understands one of the languages I have named and I will write down my answers."

The *alcalde* was enraged, but I did not let his ill-humour or his threats disturb me.

Finally he gave me a pen and told me to write in Italian my name, profession and business in Spain. I could not refuse him this pleasure, so I wrote as follows:

"My name is Jacques Casanova: I am a subject of the Republic of Venice, by profession a man of letters and in rank a Knight of the Golden Spur. I have sufficient means and I travel for pleasure. I am known to the Venetian ambassador, the Count of Aranda, the Prince de la Catolica, the Marquis of Moras and the Duke of Lossada. I have offended in no manner against the laws of His Catholic Majesty but, in spite of my innocence, I have been cast into a den of thieves and assassins by magistrates who deserve a ten times greater punishment. Since I have not infringed the laws, His Catholic Majesty must know that he has only one right over me and that is to order me to leave his

realms, which order I am ready to obey. My arms, which I see before me, have travelled with me for the last eleven years; I carry them to defend myself against highwaymen. They were seen when my effects were examined at the Gate of Alcalá, and were not confiscated, which makes it plain that they have served merely as a pretext for the infamous treatment to which I have been subjected.

After I had written out this document, I gave it to the *alcalde*, who called for an interpreter. When he had had it read to him, he rose angrily and said to me, "*Válgame Dios!* you shall suffer for your insolence."

With this threat, he went away, ordering that I be taken back to prison.

At eight o'clock Manucci called and told me that the Count of Aranda had been making inquiries about me of the Venetian ambassador, who had spoken very highly in my favour and expressed his regret that he could not take my part officially, on account of my being in disgrace with the State Inquisitors.

"He has certainly been shamefully used," said the count, "but an intelligent man should not lose his head. I should have known nothing about it, but for a furious letter he has written me; and Don Manuel de Roda and the Duke of Lossada have received epistles in the same style. Casanova is in the right, but that is not the way to address people."

"If he really said I was in the right, that is sufficient."

"He said it sure enough."

"Then he must do me justice and, as for my style, everyone has a style of his own. I am furious and I wrote furiously. Look at this place; I have no bed, the floor is covered with filth and I am obliged to sleep on a narrow bench. Don't you think it is natural that I should desire to eat the hearts of the scoundrels who have placed me here? If I do not leave this hell by to-morrow, I shall kill myself or go mad."

Manucci understood the horrors of my situation. He promised to come again early the next day and advised me to see what money would do towards procuring a bed, but I would not listen to him, for I was suffering from injustice and was therefore obstinate. Besides, the thought of the vermin frightened me and I was afraid for my purse and the jewels I had about me.

I spent a second night worse than the first, going to sleep from sheer exhaustion, only to awake and find myself slipping off the bench.

Manucci came before eight o'clock and my appearance shocked him. He had come in his carriage, bringing with him some excellent chocolate, which in some measure restored my spirits. As I was finishing it, an officer of high rank, accompanied by two officers, came in and called out, "M. de Casanova!"

I stepped forward and presented myself.

"Chevalier," he began, "the Count of Aranda is at the gate of the prison; he is much grieved at the treatment you have received. He heard about it only through the letter you wrote him yesterday and, if you had written sooner, your pains would have been shorter."

"Such was my intention, colonel, but a soldier . . ."

I proceeded to tell him the story of the swindling soldier and, on hearing his name, the colonel called the captain of the guard, reprimanded him severely and ordered him to give me back the crown himself. I took the money laughingly and the colonel then ordered the captain to fetch the offending officer and to give him a flogging before me.

This officer, the emissary of the all-powerful Aranda, was Count Royas, commanding the garrison of Buen Retiro. I told him all the circumstances of my arrest and of my imprisonment in that filthy place. I told him that, if I did not get back that day my arms, my liberty and my honour, I should either go mad or kill myself.

"Here," I said, "I can neither rest nor sleep and a man needs sleep every night. If you had come a little earlier, you would have seen the disgusting filth with which the floor was covered. You can still see the remains of it."

The worthy man was taken aback with the energy with which I spoke. I saw his feelings and hastened to say:

"You must remember, colonel, that I am suffering from injustice and am in a furious rage. I am a man of honour, like yourself, and you can imagine the effect of such treatment on me."

Manucci told him in Spanish that in my normal state I was a good fellow enough. The colonel expressed his pity for me and assured me that my arms would be restored to me and my liberty, too, in the course of the day.

"Afterwards," said he, "you must go and thank his excellency the Count of Aranda, who came here expressly for your sake. He bade me tell you that your release would be delayed till the afternoon, that you may have full satisfaction for the affront you have received, if it is an affront, for the penalties of the law dishonour only the guilty. In this instance the *alcalde* Messa was deceived by the rascal who was in your service."

"There he is," said I. "Be good enough to have him removed, or in my indignation I might kill him."

"He shall be taken away this moment," he replied.

The colonel went out and two minutes later two soldiers came in and took the rogue away between them. I never saw him again and never troubled myself to inquire what had become of him.

The colonel begged me to accompany him to the guardroom to see the thieving soldier flogged. Manucci was at my side and at some little distance stood the Count of Aranda, surrounded by officers and accompanied by a royal guard.

The business kept us there a couple of hours. Before leaving me, the colonel begged me to come and dine at his house with Mengs.

When I returned to my filthy prison, I found a clean armchair, which I was informed had been brought in for me. I sat down in it immediately and Manucci left me, after embracing me again and again. He was my sincere friend and I can never forgive myself the stupidity which made me offend him grievously. He never forgave me, at which I am not surprised, but I believe my readers will agree with me in thinking that he carried his vengeance too far.

After the scene which had taken place, the vile crowd of prisoners stood gazing at me in stupid silence and Marazzani came up to me and begged me to use my offices for him.

Dinner was brought me as usual and at three o'clock the *alcalde* Messa appeared and begged me to follow him, as he had received orders to take me back to my lodging, where he hoped I would find everything in perfect order. At the same time he showed me my arms, which one of his men was going to fetch to my house. The officer of the guard returned me my sword; the *alcalde*, who was in his black cloak, put himself on my left, and thus I was escorted home, with a guard of thirty constables. The seals were removed from my apartment and after a brief inspection I pronounced that everything was in perfect order.

"If you had not had in your service, *señor caballero*, a rascal and a traitor (who shall end his days in the galleys) you would never have written down the servants of His Catholic Majesty as scoundrels."

"*Señor alcalde*, my indignation made me write the same sentence to four of His Majesty's ministers. Then I believed what I wrote, but I do so no longer. Let us forget and forgive; but you must confess that, if I had not known how to write a letter, you would have sent me to the galleys."

"Alas! it is very likely."

I need not say that I hastened to remove all traces of the vile prison where I had suffered so much. When I was ready to go out, my first grateful visit was paid to the noble cobbler. The worthy man was proud of the fulfilment of his prophecy and glad to see me again. Donna Ignazia was wild with delight—perhaps she had not been so sure of my release—and, when Don Diego heard of the satisfaction that had been given me, he said that a grandee of Spain could not have asked for more. I begged the worthy people to come and dine with me, telling them I would name the day another time, and they accepted gladly.

I felt that my love for Donna Ignazia had increased immensely since our last meeting.

Afterwards I called on Mengs, who, with his knowledge of Spanish law, had expected nothing less than to see me. When he heard of my triumphant release, he overwhelmed me with congratulations. He was in his Court dress, an unusual thing with him, and, on my asking him the reason, he told me he had been to Doñ Manuel de Roda's to speak on my behalf but had not succeeded in obtaining an audience. He gave me a Venetian letter which had just arrived for me. I opened it

and found it was from M. Dandolo and contained an enclosure for M. de Mocenigo. M. Dandolo said that, on reading the enclosed letter, the ambassador would have no more scruples about introducing me, as it contained a recommendation from one of the Inquisitors on behalf of the three. When I told Mengs of this, he said it was now in my power to make my fortune in Spain and that now was the time, when all the ministers would be only too anxious to do something for me in order to make me forget the wrongs I had received.

"I advise you," he said, "to take the letter to the ambassador immediately. Take my carriage; after what you have undergone for the last few days, you cannot be in a walking humour."

I had need of rest and told Mengs that I would not sup with him that night but would dine with him the next day. The ambassador was out, so I left the letter with Manucci and then drove home and slept profoundly for twelve hours.

Manucci came to see me the next day in high spirits and told me that M. Girolamo Zulian had written to the ambassador on behalf of M. de Mula, informing him that he need not hesitate to countenance me, as any articles the Tribunal might have against me were in no degree prejudicial to my honour.

"The ambassador," he continued, "proposes to introduce you at Court next week and he wants you to dine with him to-day; there will be a numerous company at dinner."

"I am engaged to Mengs."

"No matter, he shall be asked as well; you must come. Consider the effect of your presence at the ambassador's the day after your triumph."

"You are right. Go and ask Mengs and tell the ambassador that I have much pleasure in accepting his invitation."

CHAPTER 126

DIFFERENT circumstances in my life seem to have combined to render me somewhat superstitious, it is a humiliating confession and yet I make it. But who could help it? A man who abandons himself to his whims and fancies is like a child playing with a billiard cue. He may make a stroke that would be an honour to the most practised and scientific player; and such are the strange coincidences of life which, as I have said, have caused me to become superstitious.

Fortune, which under the humbler name of "luck" seems but a word, is a very divinity when it guides the most important actions of a man's life. Always it has seemed to me that this divinity is not blind, as the mythologists affirm; she has brought me low only to exalt me and I have found myself in high places only, as it seems, to be cast into the depths. Fortune has done her best to make me regard her as a reasoning, almighty power; she has made me feel that the strength of my will is as nothing before this mysterious power, which takes my

will and moulds it and makes it a mere instrument for the accomplishment of its decrees.

I could not possibly have done anything in Spain without the help of the representative of my country and he would not have dared to do anything for me without the letter I had just given him. This letter, in its turn, would probably have had but slight effect if it had not come to hand so soon after my imprisonment, which had become the talk of the town, through the handsome satisfaction the Count of Aranda had given me.

The letter made the ambassador sorry that he had not interposed on my behalf, but he hoped people would believe that the count would not have acted as he did if it had not been for his interposition. His favourite, Count Manucci, had come to ask me to dinner; as it happened, I was engaged to Mengs and this resulted in an invitation for the painter, which flattered his vanity excessively; he fancied that the invitation proceeded from gratitude and it certainly smoothed away the humiliation he had felt at seeing me arrested in his house. He immediately wrote to the effect that he would call upon me with his carriage.

I called on the Count of Aranda, who kept me waiting for a quarter of an hour and then came in with some papers in his hand. He smiled when he saw me and said:

"Your business is done. Stay, here are four letters; take them and read them over again."

"Why should I read them again? This is the document I gave the *alcalde*."

"I know that. Read it and confess that you should not have written so violently, in spite of the wrongs that vexed you."

"I crave your pardon, my lord, but a man who meditates suicide does not pick terms. I believed that your excellency was at the bottom of it all."

"Then you don't know me. Go and thank Don Manuel de Roda, who wants to know you, and I shall be glad if you will call once on the *alcalde*, not to make him an apology, for you owe him none, but as an act of politeness to salve over the hard things you said of him. If you write the story to Princess Lubomirska, I hope you will tell her that I did my best for you."

I then called on Colonel Royas, who told me I had made a great mistake in saying I was satisfied.

"What could I claim?"

"Everything. Dismissal of the *alcalde* and compensation to the tune of fifty thousand *duros*. Spain is a country where a man may speak out, save in the matters which the Holy Inquisition looks after."

This colonel, now a general, is one of the pleasantest Spaniards I have ever met.

I had not long been back at my lodging when Mengs called for me in his carriage. The ambassador gave me a most gracious reception and overwhelmed Mengs with compliments for having endeavoured to shel-

ter me. At dinner I told the story of my sufferings at Buen Retiro and the conversation I had just had with the Count of Aranda, who had returned me my letters. The company expressed a desire to see them and everyone gave an opinion on the matter.

The guests were Abbé Bigliardi, the French consul, Don Rodriguez de Campomanés and the famous Don Pablo de Olavides. Everyone spoke his mind and the ambassador condemned the letters as too "ferocious." On the other hand, Campomanés approved them, saying that they were not abusive and were wonderfully adapted to my purpose, namely, to force the reader to do me prompt justice, were the reader to be the King himself. Olavides and Bigliardi echoed this sentiment. Mengs sided with the ambassador and begged me to come and live with him, so as not to be liable to any more inconveniences from spying servants. I did not accept this invitation till I had been urged for some time, and I noted the remark of the ambassador, who said I owed Mengs this reparation for the indirect affront he had received.

I was delighted to make the acquaintance of Campomanés and Olavides, men of intellect and of a stamp very rare in Spain. They were not exactly men of learning, but they were above religious prejudices and were not only fearless in throwing public scorn upon them, but even laboured openly for their destruction. It was Campomanés who had furnished Aranda with all the damaging matter against the Jesuits. By a curious coincidence, Campomanés, the Count of Aranda and the General of the Jesuits were all squint-eyed. I asked Campomanés why he hated the Jesuits so bitterly, and he replied that he looked upon them in the same light as the other religious orders, whom he considered a parasitical and noxious race and would gladly banish them all not only from the peninsula, but from the face of the earth.

He was the author of all the pamphlets that had been written on the subject of mortmain and, as he was an intimate friend of the ambassador's, M. Mocenigo had furnished him with an account of the proceedings of the Venetian Republic against the monks. He might have dispensed with this source of information if he had read the writings of Father Paul Sarpi on the same subject. Quick-sighted, firm, with the courage of his opinions, Campomanés was the fiscal of the Supreme Council of Castille, of which Aranda was president. Everyone knew him to be a thoroughly honest man, who acted solely for the good of the state. Thus statesmen and officials had warm feelings of respect for him, while the monks and bigots hated the sound of his name and the Inquisition had sworn to be his ruin. It was said openly that he would either become a bishop or perish in the cells of the holy brotherhood. The prophecy was only partly fulfilled. Four years after my visit to Spain he was incarcerated in the dungeons of the Inquisition but obtained his release after three years' confinement by doing public penance. The leprosy which eats out the heart of Spain is not yet cured. Olavides was still more harshly treated and even Aranda would have fallen a victim if he had not had the good sense to ask the King to send him to France as his ambassador. The King was very glad to

do so, as otherwise he would have been forced to deliver him up to the infuriated monks.

Charles III, who died a madman, was a remarkable character. He was as obstinate as a mule, as weak as a woman, as gross as a Dutchman and a thorough-paced bigot. It was no wonder that he became the tool of his confessor.

At the time of which I am speaking, the cabinet of Madrid was occupied in a curious scheme. A thousand Catholic families had been enticed from Switzerland to form a colony in the beautiful but deserted region called the Sierra Morena, well known all over Europe by its mention in Don Quixote. Nature seemed there to have lavished all her gifts; the climate was perfect, the soil fertile, and streams of all kinds watered the land but, in spite of all, it was almost depopulated.

Desiring to change this state of things, His Catholic Majesty had decided to cede to industrious colonists all the agricultural yield during a certain number of years. He had consequently invited Swiss Catholics and had paid their expenses for the journey. The Swiss arrived and the Spanish Government did its best to provide them with lodging and spiritual and temporal superintendence. Olavides was the soul of this scheme. He conferred with the ministers to provide the population with magistrates, priests, a governor, craftsmen of all kinds to build churches and houses, and especially a bull-ring, a necessity for the Spaniards but a perfectly useless provision as far as the simple Swiss were concerned.

In the documents which Don Pablo de Olavides had drafted on the subject, he demonstrated the inexpediency of establishing any religious orders in the new colony but, if he could have proved his opinion to be correct with foot and rule, he would none the less have drawn on his head the implacable hatred of the monks and of the bishop in whose diocese the new colony was situated. The secular clergy supported Olavides, but the monks cried out against his impiety and, as the Inquisition was eminently monkish in its sympathies, persecution had already begun and this was one of the subjects of conversation at the dinner at which I was present.

I listened to the arguments, sensible and otherwise, which were advanced, and finally gave my opinion, as modestly as I could, that in a few years the colony would vanish like smoke, and this for several reasons.

"The Swiss," I said, "are very peculiar people; if you transplant them to a foreign shore, they languish and die; they become a prey to homesickness. When this once begins in a Switzer, the only thing is to take him home to the mountain, the lake or the valley where he was born, or else he will infallibly die.

"It would be wise, I think," I continued, "to endeavour to combine a Spanish colony with the Swiss colony, so as to effect a mingling of races. At first, at all events, their rulers, both spiritual and temporal, should be Swiss and, above all, you would have to insure them complete immunity from the Inquisition. The Swiss, bred in the country, have

peculiar customs and manners of love-making of which the Spanish Church might not exactly approve, but the least attempt to restrain their liberty in this respect would immediately bring about a general homesickness."

At first Olavides thought I was joking, but he soon found out that my remarks had some sense in them. He begged me to write out my opinions on the subject and give him the benefit of my knowledge. I promised to do so and Mengs fixed a day for him to come and dine with me at his house.

The next day I moved my household goods to Mengs's house and began my philosophical and physiological treatise on the colony.

I called on Don Manuel de Roda, who was a man of letters, a *rara avis* in Spain. He liked Latin poetry, had read some Italian but very naturally gave the palm to the Spanish poets. He welcomed me warmly, begged me to come and see him again and told me how sorry he had been at my unjust imprisonment.

The Duke of Lossada congratulated me on the way in which the Venetian ambassador spoke of me everywhere, and encouraged me in my idea of getting some place under the Government, promising to give me his support in the matter.

The Prince de la Catolica invited me to dinner with the Venetian ambassador and in the course of three weeks I had made a great number of valuable acquaintances. I thought seriously of seeking employment in Spain as, nothing heard from Lisbon, I dared not go there on the chance of finding something to do. I had not received any letters from Pauline of late and had no idea as to what had become of her.

I passed a good many of my evenings with a Spanish lady named Sabatini, who gave *tertulias*, or assemblies, frequented chiefly by fifth-rate literary men. I also visited the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, a well read and intelligent man, to whom I had been presented by Don Domingo Varnier, one of the gentlemen of the King's chamber, whom I had met at Mengs's house. I paid a good many visits to Donna Ignazia but, as I was never left alone with her, these visits became tiresome. When I suggested a party of pleasure with her and her cousins, she replied that she would like it as much as I but, as it was Lent and near Holy Week, in which God died for our salvation, it was more fit to think of penance than pleasure. After Easter, she said, we might consider the matter. Ignazia was a perfect example of the young Spanish devotee.

A fortnight later the King and Court left Madrid for Aranjuez. M. de Mocenigo asked me to come and stay with him, as he would be able to present me at Court. As may be imagined, I should have been only too glad to accept but on the eve of my departure, as I was driving with Mengs, I was suddenly seized with a fever and was convulsed so violently that my head was dashed against the carriage window, which it shivered to fragments. Mengs ordered the coachman to drive home and I was put to bed. In four hours, I was seized with a sweating fit, which lasted ten or twelve hours. The bed and two mat-

tresses were soaked through with my perspiration, which dripped on to the floor beneath. The fever abated in forty-eight hours but left me in such a state of weakness that I was kept to my bed for a whole week and could not go to Aranjuez till Holy Saturday. The ambassador welcomed me warmly but, on the night I arrived, a small lump which I had felt in the course of the day grew as large as an egg and I was unable to go to mass on Easter Day. In five days the excrescence became as large as an average melon, much to the amazement of Manucci and the ambassador and even of the King's surgeon, a Frenchman, who declared he had never seen the like before. I was not alarmed personally for, as I suffered no pain and the lump was quite soft, I guessed it was only a collection of lymph, the remainder of the evil humours which I had sweated away in a fever. I told the surgeon the history of the fever and begged him to lance the abscess, which he did, and for four days the opening discharged an almost incredible amount of matter. On the fifth day the wound was almost healed, but the exhaustion had left me so weak that I could not leave my bed.

Such was my situation when I received a letter from Mengs. It is before me at the present moment and I give below a true copy:

"Yesterday the rector of the parish in which I reside affixed to the church door a list of those of his parishioners who are atheists and have neglected their Easter duties. Amongst them your name figures in full and the aforesaid rector has reproached me bitterly for harbouring a heretic. I did not know what answer to make, for I feel sure that you could have stopped in Madrid a day longer to discharge the duties of a Christian, even if only out of regard for me. The duty I owe to the King, my master, the care I am bound to take of my reputation, and my fears of being molested, all make me request you to look upon my house as yours no longer. When you return to Madrid, you may go where you will and my servants shall transport your effects to your new abode.

I am, etc.,

Antonio Rafael Mengs."

I was so annoyed by this rude, brutal and ungrateful letter that, if I had not been seven leagues from Madrid and in a state of the utmost weakness, Mengs would have suffered for his insolence. I told the messenger who had brought it to be gone, but he replied that he had orders to await my reply. I crushed the letter in my hand and flung it at his face, saying, "Go and tell your unworthy master what I did with his letter, and tell him that is the only answer such a letter deserves."

The innocent messenger went his way in great amazement.

My anger gave me strength and, having dressed and summoned a sedan-chair, I went to church and was confessed by a Grey Friar and at six o'clock the next morning I received the Sacrament.

My confessor was kind enough to give me a certificate to the effect that I had been obliged to keep my bed since my arrival *al sitio* and that, in spite of my extreme weakness, I had gone to church and had

confessed and communicated like a good Christian. He also told me the name of the priest who had affixed the paper containing my name to the door of the church.

When I returned to the ambassador's house, I wrote to this priest, telling him that the certificate would inform him as to my reasons for not communicating. I expressed a hope that, being satisfied of my orthodoxy, he would not delay in removing my name from his church door, and I concluded by begging him to hand the enclosed letter to the Chevalier Mengs.

To the painter I wrote that I felt I had deserved the shameful insult he had given me by my great mistake in acceding to his request to honour him by staying in his house. However, as a good Christian who had just received the Holy Communion, I told him that his brutal behaviour was forgiven, but I bade him take to heart the line, well known to all honest people and doubtless unknown to him, *Turpius ejicitur quam non admittitur hospes*.

After sending the letter, I told the ambassador what had happened, to which he replied:

"I am not at all surprised at what you tell me. Mengs is liked only for his talents in painting; in everything else he is well known to be little better than a fool."

As a matter of fact, he had asked me to stay with him only to gratify his own vanity. He knew that all the town was talking of my imprisonment and of the satisfaction the Count of Aranda had accorded me, and he wanted people to think it was his influence that had obtained the favour shown me. Indeed, he had said in a moment of exaltation that I should have compelled the *alcalde* Messa to escort me, not to my own house, but to his, as it was in his that I had been arrested.

Mengs was an exceedingly ambitious and a very jealous man; he hated all his brother painters. His colour and design were excellent, but his invention was very weak and invention is as necessary to a great painter as to a great poet. I happened to say to him one day, "Just as every poet should be a painter, so every painter should be a poet." And he got quite angry, thinking I was alluding to his weakness of imagination, which he felt but would not acknowledge.

He was an ignorant man and liked to pass for a scholar; he sacrificed to Bacchus and Comus and would fain be thought sober; he was lustful, bad-tempered, envious and miserly, but yet would be considered a virtuous man. He loved hard work and this forced him to abstain, as a rule, from dinner, as he drank so inordinately at that meal that he could do nothing after it. When he dined out, he had to drink nothing but water, so as not to compromise his reputation for temperance. He spoke four languages, all badly, and could not even write his native tongue with correctness and yet he claimed perfection for his grammar and orthography, as for all his other qualities. While I was staying with him, I became acquainted with some of his weak points and endeavoured to correct them, at which he took great offence. The fellow writhed under a sense of obligation to me. Once I prevented his send-

ing a petition to the Court which the King would have seen and which would have made Mengs ridiculous. In signing his name, he had written *el más inclito*, wishing to say "your most humble." I pointed out to him that *el más inclito* meant "the most illustrious," and that the Spanish for the expression he wanted was *el más humilde*. The proud fool was quite enraged, telling me he knew Spanish better than I, but, when the dictionary was consulted, he had to swallow the bitter pill of confessing himself in the wrong.

Another time I suppressed a heavy and stupid criticism of his on someone who had maintained that there were no monuments still existing of the antediluvian period. Mengs thought he would confound the author by citing the remains of the Tower of Babel—a double piece of folly this, for, in the first place, there are no such remains, and, in the second, the Tower of Babel was a postdiluvian building.

He was also largely given to the discussion of metaphysical questions, on which his knowledge was simply *nil*, and a favourite pursuit of his was defining beauty in the abstract; when he was on this topic, the nonsense he talked was something dreadful.

Mengs was a very passionate man and would sometimes beat his children most cruelly. More than once I have rescued his poor sons from his furious hands. He boasted that his father, a bad Bohemian artist, had brought him up with the stick. Thus, he said, he had become a great painter and he wished his own children to enjoy the same advantages.

He was deeply offended when he received a letter the address of which omitted his title of "chevalier" and his name, Rafael. One day I ventured to say that these things were but trifles after all and that I had taken no offence at his omitting the "chevalier" on the letter he had written to me, though I was a knight of the same order as he. He very wisely made no answer, but his objection to the omission of his baptismal names was a very ridiculous one. He said he was called Antonio after Antonio Correggio and Rafael after Rafaello da Urbino and that those who omitted these names, or either of them, implicitly denied his possession of the qualities of both these great painters.

Once I dared to tell him he had made a mistake in the hand of one of his figures, as the ring finger was shorter than the index. He replied sharply that it was quite right, and showed me his hand by way of proof. I laughed and showed him my hand in return, saying that I was certain my hand was made like that of all the descendants of Adam.

"Then whom do you think I am descended from?"

"I don't know, but you are certainly not of the same species as myself."

"You mean you are not of my species; all well made hands of men, and women too, are like mine and not like yours."

"I'll wager you a hundred doubloons you are in the wrong."

He got up, threw down brushes and palette and rang up his servants, saying, "We shall see which is right."

The servants came and on examination he found that I was right. For once in his life he laughed and passed it off as a joke, saying, "I am delighted that I can boast of being unique in one particular, at all events."

Here I must note another very sensible remark of his. He had painted a Magdalen which was really wonderfully beautiful. For ten days he had said every morning, "The picture will be finished to-night." At last I told him he had made a mistake in saying it would be finished, as he was still working on it.

"No, I did not," he replied. "Ninety-nine connoisseurs out of a hundred would have pronounced it finished long ago, but I want the praise of the hundredth man. There's not a picture in the world that can be called "finished," save in a relative sense; this Magdalen will not be finished till I stop working at it, and then it will be finished only relatively for, if I were to give another day's work to it, it would be more finished still. Not one of Petrarch's sonnets is a really finished production—no, nor any other man's sonnets. Nothing that the mind of man can conceive is perfect, save it be a mathematical theorem."

I expressed my warm approval of the excellent way in which he had spoken. He was not so sensible another time, when he expressed a wish to have been Raphael.

"He was such a great painter."

"Certainly," said I, "but what can you mean by wishing you had been Raphael? That is not sense; if you had been Raphael, you would no longer be existing. But perhaps you only meant to express a wish that you were tasting the joys of Paradise; in that case I will say no more."

"No, no; I mean I would like to have been Raphael, without troubling myself about existing now, either in soul or in body."

"Really such a desire is an absurdity; think it over and you will see it for yourself."

He flew into a rage and abused me so heartily that I could not help laughing.

Another time, he made a comparison between a tragic author and a painter, of course to the advantage of the latter. I analysed the matter calmly, showing him that the painter's labour is to a great extent purely mechanical and can be done whilst engaged in casual talk; whilst a well written tragedy is the work of genius pure and simple; therefore the poet must be immeasurably superior to the painter.

"Find me if you can," said I, "a poet who can order his supper between the lines of his tragedy or discuss the weather whilst he is composing epic verses."

When Mengs was beaten in an argument, instead of acknowledging his defeat, he invariably became brutal and insulting. He died at the age of fifty and is regarded by posterity as a stoic philosopher, a scholar and a compendium of all the virtues and this opinion must be ascribed to a fine biography of him in royal quarto, choicely printed and dedicated to the King of Spain. This panegyric is a mere tissue

of lies. Mengs was a great painter and nothing else and, if he had produced only the splendid picture which hangs over the high altar of the chapel royal in Dresden, he would deserve eternal fame, though, indeed, he is indebted to the great Raphael for the idea of the painting.

We shall hear more of Mengs when I describe my meeting with him in Rome two or three years later.

I was still weak and confined to my room when Manucci came and proposed that I go with him to Toledo.

"The ambassador," he said, "is going to give a grand official dinner to the ambassadors of the other powers and, as I have not been presented at Court, I am excluded from being present. However, if I travel, my absence will not give rise to any remarks. We shall be back in five or six days."

I was delighted to have the chance of seeing Toledo and of making the journey in a comfortable carriage, so I accepted. We started the next morning and reached Toledo in the evening of the same day. For Spain, we were lodged comfortably enough and the next day we went out under the charge of a cicerone, who took us to the Alcazar, the Louvre of Toledo, formerly the palace of the Moorish kings. Afterwards we inspected the cathedral, which is well worthy of a visit on account of the riches it contains. I saw the great tabernacle used on Corpus Christi. It is made of silver and is so heavy that it requires thirty strong men to lift it. The Archbishop of Toledo gets three hundred thousand *duros* a year and his clergy, four hundred thousand, amounting to two million francs in French money. One of the canons, as he was showing me the urns containing the relics, told me that one of them contained the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas betrayed our Lord. I begged him to let me see them, to which he replied severely that the King himself would not have dared to express such indecent curiosity.

I hastened to apologise, begging him not to take offence at a stranger's heedless request, and this seemed to calm his anger.

The Spanish priests are a band of knaves, but one has to treat them with more respect than one would pay to honest men elsewhere.

The following day we were shown the Museum of Natural History. It was rather a dull exhibition but, at all events, one could laugh at it without exciting the wrath of the monks and the terrors of the Inquisition. We were shown amongst other wonders a stuffed dragon and the man who exhibited it said, "This proves, gentlemen, that the dragon is not a fabulous animal." But I thought there was more of art than of nature about the beast. He then showed us a basilisk but, instead of slaying us with a glance, it only made us laugh. The greatest wonder of all, however, was nothing else than a Freemason's apron, which, as the curator very sagely declared, proved the existence of such an order, whatever some might say.

The journey restored me to health and, when I returned to Aranjuez, I proceeded to pay my court to all the ministers. The ambassador presented me to Marquis Grimaldi, with whom I had some conver-

sations on the subject of the Swiss colony, which was going on badly. I submitted a brief in which I proved that this colony should be composed of Spaniards.

"Yes," said he, "but Spain is thinly populated everywhere and your plan would amount to impoverishing one district to make another rich."

"Not at all, for, if you took ten persons who are dying of poverty in the Asturias and placed them in the Sierra Morena, they would not die till they had begotten fifty children. This fifty would beget two hundred and so on."

My scheme was laid before a commission and the marquis promised I should be made governor of the colony if the plan was accepted.

An Italian Opéra Comique was then amusing the Court, with the exception of the King, who had no taste for music. His Majesty bore a considerable resemblance to a sheep in his looks and it seemed as if the likeness went deeper, for sheep have not the slightest idea of sound. His favourite pursuit was sport and the reason will be given later on.

An Italian musician at the Court desired to compose some music for a new opera and, as there was no time to send to Italy, I offered to compose the libretto. My offer was accepted and by the next day the first act was ready. The music was composed in four days and the Venetian ambassador invited all the ministers to the rehearsal in the grand hall of his palace. The music was pronounced exquisite; the two other acts were written and in a fortnight the opera was put on the stage. The musician was rewarded handsomely, but I was considered too grand to work for money and my reward was paid me in the Court money of compliments. However, I was glad to see that the ambassador was proud of me and that the ministers' esteem for me seemed increased.

In writing the libretto, I had become acquainted with the actresses. The chief of them was a Roman named Pelliccia, neither pretty nor ugly, with a slight squint and but moderate talents. Her younger sister was pretty, if not handsome, but no one cared for her, while the elder was a universal favourite; her expression was pleasant, her smile delightful and her manners most captivating. Her husband was an indifferent painter, plain-looking and more like her servant than her husband. He was, indeed, her very humble servant and she treated him with great kindness. The feelings she inspired in me were not love but a sincere respect and friendship. I used to visit her every day and wrote verses for her to sing to the Roman airs she rendered so gracefully.

On one of the days of rehearsal I was pointing out to her the various great personages who were present. The manager of the company, Marescalchi by name, had entered into an arrangement with the Governor of Valencia to bring the company there in September to play comic opera in a small theatre which had been built on purpose. Italian opera had hitherto never been presented in Valencia and Mares-

calchi was hoping to make a good deal of money there. Madame Pelliccia knew nobody in Valencia and wanted a letter of introduction to someone there. She asked me if I thought she could venture to ask the Venetian ambassador to do her the favour, but I advised her to try the Duke of Arcos.

"Who is he?"

"That gentleman who is looking in your direction now."

"How can I dare ask him?"

"He is a true nobleman and I am sure he will only be too happy to oblige you. Go and ask him now; you will not be denied."

"I haven't the courage to do so. Come with me and introduce me."

"That would spoil everything; he must not even think that I am your adviser in the matter. I am going to leave you; you must make your request directly afterwards."

I walked towards the orchestra and, looking round, saw that the duke was approaching the actress.

"The thing's as good as done," I said to myself.

After the rehearsal was over, Madame Pelliccia came and told me the duke would give her the letter the day the opera was produced. He kept his word and she received a sealed letter for a merchant and banker, Don Diego Valencia. It was then May and she was not to go to Valencia till September, so we shall hear what the letter contained later on.

I often saw at Aranjuez the King's gentleman of the chamber, Don Domingo Varnier, another gentleman of the chamber in the service of the Prince of the Asturias, and one of the princess's bed-chamber women. This most popular princess succeeded in suppressing a good deal of the old etiquette and the tone of her Court lost the air of solemnity common in Spanish society. It was a strange thing to see the King of Spain always dining at eleven o'clock, like the Parisian cordwainers in the seventeenth century. His meal always consisted of the same dishes; he always went out hunting at the same hour, coming back in the evening thoroughly fatigued.

The King was ugly, but everything is relative; he was handsome compared with his brother, who was terrifically ugly.

This brother never went anywhere without a picture of the Virgin, which Mengs had painted for him. It was two feet high by three and a half broad. The figure was depicted seated on the grass, with legs crossed after the Eastern fashion and uncovered up to the knees. It was, in reality, a voluptuous painting and the prince mistook for devotion that which was really a sinful passion, for it was impossible to look upon the figure without desiring to have the original in one's arms. However, the prince did not see this and was delighted to find himself in love with the mother of the Saviour. In this he was a true Spaniard; they love only pictures of this kind and interpret in the most favourable sense the passions excited thereby.

In Madrid I had seen a picture of the Madonna with the Child at her breast. It was the altar-piece of a chapel in the Calle San Jerónimo.

The place was filled all day by the devout, who came to adore the Mother of God, whose figure was interesting only by reason of her magnificent breast. The alms given at this chapel were so numerous that, in the hundred and fifty years since the picture had been placed there, the clergy had been able to purchase numerous lamps and candlesticks of silver and vessels of silver gilt and even of gold. The doorway was always blocked by carriages and a sentinel was placed there to keep order amongst the coachmen; no nobleman would pass by without going in to pray to the Virgin and to contemplate those *beata ubera, quæ lactaverunt æterni Patris Filium*. This devotion does not surprise anyone who knows mankind. But note what happened.

When I returned to Madrid, I wanted to pay a visit to the Abbé Pico and told my coachman to take another way, so as to avoid the crush in front of the chapel.

"It is not so frequented now, señor," said he. "I can easily get by it."

He continued on his way and I found the entrance to the chapel deserted. As I was getting out of the carriage, I asked my coachman the reason for the change and he replied, "Oh, señor! men are getting more wicked every day."

This reason did not satisfy me and, when I had taken my chocolate with the abbé, an intelligent and venerable old man, I asked him why the chapel in question had lost its reputation. He burst out laughing and replied, "Excuse me, I really cannot tell you. Go and see for yourself; your curiosity will soon be satisfied."

As soon as I left him, I went to the chapel and the state of the picture told me all. The breast of the Virgin had disappeared under a handkerchief which some profane brush had dared to paint over it. The beautiful picture was spoilt, the magic fascination had disappeared. Even the teat had been painted out; the Child held on to nothing and the position of the Virgin's head no longer appeared natural, since she was no longer seeking to watch the lips of her suckling child. This disaster took place at the end of the Carnival of 1768. The old chaplain had died and the vandal who succeeded him pronounced the painting a scandalous one and robbed it of all its charm.

He may have been in the right as a fool but, as a Christian and a Spaniard, he was certainly in the wrong and he was probably soon convinced of the mistake he had made by the diminution in the offerings of the faithful.

My interest in the study of human nature led me to call on this priest, whom I expected to find a stupid old man. I went one morning but, instead of being old, the priest was an active, clever-looking man of thirty, who immediately offered me chocolate with the best grace imaginable. I refused, as every stranger should do, for, besides its being usually bad, the Spaniards offer visitors chocolate everywhere and at all hours, so that, if one drank it all, one would choke.

I lost no time in exordiums, but came to the point at once by saying

that, as a lover of paintings, I had been grieved at finding the magnificent *Madonna* spoilt.

"Very likely," he replied, "but it was exactly the physical beauty of the picture that rendered it in my eyes unfit to represent one whose aspect should purify and purge the senses, instead of exciting them. Let all the pictures in the world be destroyed if they be found to have caused the commission of one mortal sin."

"Who allowed you to commit this mutilation? The Venetian State Inquisitors, even M. Barberigo, though he is a devout man, would have put you under The Leads for such a deed. The love of Paradise should not be allowed to interfere with the fine arts and I am sure that Saint Luke himself (who was a painter, as you know) would condemn you if he could come to life again."

"Sir, I needed no one's leave or licence. I have to say mass at that altar every day and I am not ashamed to tell you that I was unable to consecrate. You are a man and a Christian; you can excuse my weakness. That voluptuous picture drew my thoughts away from holy things."

"Who obliged you to look at it?"

"I did not look at it; the Devil, the enemy of God, made me look at it, in spite of myself."

"Then you should have mutilated yourself, like Origen. Your generative organs, believe me, are not as valuable as the picture you have ruined."

"Sir, you insult me."

"Not at all; I have no intention of doing so."

That young priest showed me the door with such brusqueness that I felt sure he would inform against me to the Inquisition. I knew he would have no difficulty in finding out my name, so I resolved to be beforehand with him.

Both my fear and my resolve were inspired by an incident which I shall mention as an episode.

A few days before, I had met a Frenchman named Ségur, who had just come out of the prisons of the Inquisition. He had been shut up for three years for committing the following crime:

In the hall of his house there was a fountain, composed of a marble basin and the statue of a naked child who discharged the water in the same way as the well known statue of Brussels, that is to say, by his virile member. The child might be a Cupid or an Infant Jesus, as you please, but the sculptor had adorned the head with a kind of aureole and so fanatics declared that it was a mocking of God. Poor Ségur was accused of impiety and the Inquisitors dealt with him accordingly.

I felt that my fault might be adjudged as great as Ségur's and, not caring to run the risk of a like punishment, I called on the bishop, who held the office of Grand Inquisitor, and told him word for word the conversation I had had with the iconoclast chaplain. I ended by

craving pardon, if I had offended the chaplain, as I was a good Christian and orthodox on all points.

I had never expected to find the Grand Inquisitor of Madrid a kindly and intelligent, though ill-favoured, prelate, but so it was and he did nothing but laugh from the beginning to the end of my story—for he would not let me call it a confession.

"The chaplain," he said, "is himself blameworthy and unfit for his position in that he has adjudged others to be as weak as himself; in fact, he has committed a wrong against religion. Nevertheless, my dear son, it was not wise of you to go and irritate him."

As I had told him my name, he showed me smilingly an accusation against me, drawn up by someone who had witnessed the fact. The good bishop gently chid me for having called the friar-confessor of the Duke of Medina an ignoramus for refusing to admit that a priest, even if he had dined, should say mass a second time on a feast day at the command of his sovereign prince, if the latter had not yet heard mass.

"You were quite right in your contention," said the Inquisitor, "but every truth is not good to utter and it was wrong to call the man an ignoramus to his face. In future you would do well to avoid all idle discussion on religious matters on both dogma and discipline. And I must also tell you, in order that you may not leave Spain with any harsh ideas on the Inquisition, that the priest who affixed your name to the church door amongst the excommunicated has been severely reprimanded. He ought to have given you a fatherly admonition and, above all, inquired as to your health, as we know that you were seriously ill at the time."

Thereupon I knelt down and kissed his hand and went my way, well pleased with my call.

To go back to Aranjuez. As soon as I heard that the ambassador could not put me up in Madrid, I wrote to the worthy cobbler, Don Diego, that I wanted a well furnished room, a closet, a good bed and an honest servant. I informed him how much I was willing to spend a month, and said I would leave Aranjuez as soon as I heard that everything was ready.

I was a good deal occupied with the question of colonising the Sierra Morena; I wrote principally on the subject of the civil government, a most important item in a scheme for a new colony. My articles pleased the Marquis Grimaldi and flattered Mocenigo, for the latter hoped that I would become governor of the colony, and that his embassy would thereby shine with a borrowed light.

My labours did not prevent my amusing myself, and I frequented the society of those about the Court who could tell me most of the King and royal family. Don Varnier, a man of much frankness and intelligence, was my principal source of information. I asked him one day whether the King was fond of Gregorio Squillace only because he had once been his wife's lover.

"That's an idle calumny," he replied. "If the epithet 'chaste' can

be applied to any monarch, Charles III certainly deserves it better than any other. He has never touched any woman in his life except his wife, not only out of respect for the sanctity of marriage, but also as a good Christian. He has avoided this sin that his soul may remain pure and so as not to have the shame of confessing it to his chaplain. He enjoys an iron constitution, sickness is unknown to him and he is a thorough Spaniard in temperament. Ever since his marriage, he has paid his duty to his wife every day, except when the state of her health compelled her to call a truce. In such seasons this chaste husband brought down his fleshly desires by the fatigue of hunting and by abstinence. You can imagine his distress at being left a widower, for he would rather die than take a mistress. His only resource was in hunting and in so planning out his day that he should have no time left wherein to think of women. It was a difficult matter, for he cares for neither reading nor writing, music wearies him and conversation of a lively turn inspires him with disgust.

"He has adopted the following plan, in which he will persevere till his dying day:

"He dresses at seven, then goes into his dressing-room and has his hair done. At eight o'clock, he says his prayers, then hears mass and, when this is over, takes chocolate and an enormous pinch of snuff, over which his big nose ruminates for some minutes; this is his only pinch in the whole day. At nine o'clock he sees his ministers and works with them till eleven. Then comes dinner, which he always takes alone, then a short visit to the Princess of the Asturias and at twelve sharp he gets into his carriage and drives to the hunting-grounds. At seven he takes a morsel wherever he happens to be and at eight o'clock comes home so tired that he often goes to sleep before he can get his clothes off. Thus he keeps down the desires of the flesh."

"Poor voluntary martyr!"

"He thought of marrying a second time but, when Adelaide of France saw his portrait, she was quite frightened and refused him. He was very mortified and renounced all thoughts of marriage and woe to the courtier who should advise him to get a mistress!"

In speaking further of his character, Don Domingo told me the ministers had good cause for making him inaccessible as, whenever anyone did succeed in getting at him and asking a favour, he made a point of granting it, as it was at such times that he felt himself really a King.

"Then he is not a hard man, as some say?"

"Not at all. Kings seldom have the reputation they deserve. The most accessible monarchs are the least generous; they are overwhelmed with importunate requests and so their first instinct is always to refuse."

"But as Charles III is so inaccessible, he can have no opportunity of either granting or refusing."

"People catch him when he is hunting; he is usually in a good humour then. His chief defect is his obstinacy; when he has once

made up his mind, there is no changing it. He has the greatest liking for his brother and can scarce refuse him anything, though he must be master in all things. It is thought he will give him leave to marry for the sake of his salvation; the King has the greatest horror of illegitimate children and his brother has three already."

There were an immense number of persons at Aranjuez who persecuted the ministers in the hope of getting employment.

"They all go back as they come," said Don Domingo, "that is, empty-handed"

"Then they ask impossibilities?"

"They don't ask anything. 'What do you want?' says a minister. 'What your excellency will let me have.' 'What can you do?' 'I am ready to do whatever your excellency pleases to think best for me.' 'Please leave me. I have no time to waste.'"

That is always the way. Charles III died a madman; the Queen of Portugal is mad; the King of England has been mad and, as some say, is not really cured. There is nothing astonishing in it; a king who tries to do his duty is almost forced into madness by his enormous task.

I took leave of M. Mocenigo three days before he left Aranjuez, and I embraced Manucci affectionately. He had been most kind to me throughout my stay.

My cobbler had written to tell me that, for the sum I had mentioned, he could provide me also with a Biscayan maid who could cook. He sent me the address of my new lodging in the Calle Alcalá. I arrived there in the afternoon, having started from Aranjuez in the morning. I found that the Biscayan maid could speak French; my room was a very pleasant one, with a smaller room adjoining, where I could lodge a friend. After I had had my effects carried up, I saw my man, whose face pleased me.

I was anxious to test my cook's skill, so I ordered her to get a good supper for me and I gave her some money.

"I have some money," she replied, "and I will let you have the bill to-morrow."

After getting whatever I had left with Mengs, I went to Don Diego's house and to my astonishment found it empty. I went back and asked Philippe, my man, where Don Diego was staying.

"It's some distance, sir; I will take you there to-morrow."

"Where is my landlord?"

"On the floor above; but they are very quiet people."

"I should like to see him."

"He is gone out and won't be home till ten."

At nine o'clock, I was told that my supper was ready. I was very hungry and the neatness with which the table was laid was a pleasant surprise in Spain. I was sorry I had had no opportunity of expressing my satisfaction to Don Diego, but I sat down to supper. Then, indeed, I thought the cobbler a hero; the Biscayan maid might have entered into rivalry with the best cook in France. There were five dishes, in-

cluding my favourite delicacy, *las criadillas*, and everything was exquisite. My lodging was rather dear, but the cook made the whole arrangement a wonderful bargain.

Towards the end of supper Philippe told me that the landlord had come in and that, with my leave, he would wish me good evening.

"Show him in by all means."

I saw Don Diego and his charming daughter enter; he had rented the entire house in order to be my landlord.

CHAPTER 127

ALL you barons, counts and marquises who laugh at an untitled man who calls himself a gentleman, beware of him if you succeed in humbling him; allow him a gentle title so long as he does gentle deeds; respect the man who defines nobility in a new way which you cannot understand. With him, nobility is not a series of descents from father to son; he laughs at pedigrees, in which no account is taken of the impure blood introduced by wifely infidelities; he defines a nobleman as one who does noble deeds, who neither lies nor cheats, who prefers his honour to his life.

This latter part of the definition should make you tremble for your lives, if you meditate his dishonour. From imposture comes contempt; from contempt, hatred; from hatred, homicide, which takes out the blot of dishonour.

The cobbler Don Diego might have feared, perhaps, that I would laugh at him, when he told me he was noble; but, feeling himself to be really so, he had done his best to prove it to me. The fineness of his behaviour when I was in prison had given me some idea of the nobility of his soul, but he was not content with this. On receipt of my letter he had taken a new house, only to give up the best part of it to me. No doubt he calculated on not losing in the long run, as, after I had left, he would probably have no difficulty in letting the apartment, but his chief motive was to oblige me.

He was not disappointed; thenceforth I treated him entirely as an equal. Donna Ignazia was delighted at what her father had done for me. We talked for an hour, settling our business relations over a bottle of excellent wine. I succeeded in my contention that the Biscayan cook should be kept at my expense. All the same, I wanted the girl to think that she was in Don Diego's service, so I begged him to pay her every day, as I would take all my meals at home—at all events, till the return of the ambassador. I also told him it was a penance to me to eat alone, and I begged him to keep me company at dinner and supper every day. He tried to excuse himself but at last gave in, on condition that his daughter should take his place when he had too much work to do. As may be imagined, I had anticipated this condition and made no objection to it.

The next morning, feeling curious to see the way in which my land-

lord was lodged, I paid him a visit. I went into the little room sacred to Donno Ignazia. A bed, a chest and a chair made up the whole furniture, but beside the bed was a desk before a picture, four feet high, representing Saint Ignatius de Loyola as a fine young man, more calculated to arouse the senses than to inspire devotion.

My cobbler said to me, "I have a much better lodging than I had before, and the rent of your rooms pays me for the house four times over."

"How about the furniture and the linen?"

"It will all be paid in the course of four years. I hope this house will be my daughter's dower. It is an excellent speculation and I have to thank you for it."

"I am glad to hear it; but what is this? You seem to be making new boots."

"Quite so; but, if you look, you will see that I am working on a last which has been given me. In this way I do not have to put them on, nor need I trouble myself whether they fit well or ill."

"How much do you get?"

"Thirty *reals*."

"That's a larger price than usual."

"Yes, but there's a great difference between my work and leather and the usual work and leather of the bootmakers."

"Then I will have a last made and you shall make me a pair of shoes if you will, but I warn you they must be of the finest skin and the soles of morocco."

"They will cost more and not last so long."

"I can't help that; I can't bear any but the lightest boots."

Before I left him, he said his daughter would dine with me that day, as he was very busy.

I called on the Count of Aranda, who received me coldly, but with great politeness. I told him how I had been treated by my parish priest and by Mengs.

"I heard about it; this was worse than your imprisonment and I don't know what I could have done for you if you had not communicated and obliged the priest to take out your name. Just now they are trying to annoy me with posters, but I take no notice."

"What do they want your excellency to do?"

"To allow long cloaks and low-crowned hats; you must know all about it."

"I arrived in Madrid only yesterday evening"

"Very well. Don't come here on Sunday, as my house is to be blown up."

"I should like to see that, my lord, so I will be in your hall at noon."

"I expect you will be in good company"

I duly went and never had I seen it so full. The count was addressing the company. Under the last poster, threatening him with death, two very energetic lines were inscribed by the person who put up the

poster, knowing that he was at the same time running his head into the noose:

"If they catch me, they will hang me;
But they shall not catch me."

At dinner Donna Ignazia told me how glad she was to have me in the house, but she did not respond at all to my amorous urgings after Philippe had left the room. She blushed and sighed and then, being obliged to say something, begged me to forget everything that had passed between us. I smiled and said I was sure she knew she was asking an impossibility. I added that, even if I could forget the past, I would not do so.

I knew she was neither false nor hypocritical and felt sure her behaviour proceeded from piety; but I knew this could not last long. I would have to conquer her by slow degrees. I had had to do so with other devotees who had loved me less than she; nevertheless, they had capitulated. I was therefore sure of Donna Ignazia.

After dinner she remained a quarter of an hour with me, but I refrained from any amorous attempts. After my siesta, I dressed and went out without seeing her. In the evening, when she came in for her father, who had supped with me, I treated her with the greatest politeness, without showing any ill humour. The following day I behaved in the same manner. At dinner she told me she had broken with her lover at the beginning of Lent, and begged me not to see him if he called on me.

On Whit Sunday, I called on the Count of Aranda and Don Diego, exquisitely dressed, dined with me. I saw nothing of his daughter. I asked after her and Don Diego replied with a smile that she had shut herself up in her room to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. He pronounced these words in a manner and with a smile that he would not have dared to use if he had been speaking to a fellow Spaniard. He added that she would no doubt come down and sup with me, as he was going to sup with his brother.

"My dear Don Diego, don't let there be any false compliments between us. Before you go out, tell your daughter not to put herself out for me and that I do not pretend to put my society in comparison with that of God. Tell her to keep her room to-night and she can sup with me another time. I hope you will take my message to her."

"As you will have it so, you shall be obeyed."

After my siesta the worthy man said that Donna Ignazia thanked me and would profit by my kindness, as she did not want to see anyone on that holy day.

"I am very glad she has taken me at my word and to-morrow I will thank her for it."

I had some difficulty in shaping my lips for this reply, for this excess of devotion displeased me and even made me tremble for her love. I could not help laughing, however, when Don Diego said that a wise

father forgives an ecstasy of love. I had not expected such a philosophic remark from the mouth of a Spaniard.

The weather was unpleasant, so I resolved to stay indoors. I told Philippe that I shouldn't want the carriage and that he could go out. I told my Biscayan cook that I should not sup till ten. When I was alone, I wrote for some time and in the evening the mother lit my candles, instead of the daughter, so in the end I went to bed without any supper. At nine o'clock next morning, just as I was awaking, Donna Ignazia appeared, to my great astonishment, telling me how sorry she was to hear that I had not taken any supper.

"Alone, sad and unhappy," I replied, "I felt that abstinence was the best thing for me."

"You look downcast."

"You alone can make me look cheerful."

Here my barber came in and she left me. I then went to mass at the Church of the Good Success, where I saw all the handsome courtesans in Madrid. I dined with Don Diego and, when his daughter came in with dessert, he told her it was her fault I had gone supperless to bed.

"It shall not happen again," said she.

"Would you like to come with me to Our Lady of Atocha, my dear Ignazia?" said I.

"I should like it very much," she replied, with a side-glance at her father.

"My girl," said Don Diego, "true devotion and merriment go together and the reason is that the truly devout person has trust in God and in the integrity of one's honourable associates. Thus, you can trust in Don Jaime as an honest man, though he has not the good fortune to have been born in Spain."

I could not help laughing at this last sentence, but Don Diego was not offended. Donna Ignazia kissed her father's hands and asked if she might bring her cousin, too.

"What do you want to take the cousin for?" said Don Diego. "I will answer for Don Jaime."

"You are very kind, Don Diego, but, if Ignazia wishes her cousin to come, I shall be delighted, provided it be the elder cousin, whom I like better than the younger."

After this arrangement the father went his way and I sent Philippe to the stables to put in four mules.

When we were alone, Ignazia asked me repentantly to forgive her.

"Entirely, if you will forgive me for loving you."

"Alas! dearest, I think I shall go mad if I keep up the battle any longer."

"There need be no battle, dearest Ignazia; either love me as I love you or tell me to leave the house and see you no more. I will obey, but that will not make you happy."

"I know that. No, you shall not go from your own house. But allow me to tell you that you are mistaken in your estimate of my cousins' characters. I know what influenced you, but you do not know all. The

younger one is a good girl and, though she is ugly, she, too, has succumbed to love. But the elder, who is ten times uglier, is mad with rage at never having had a lover. She thinks she made you fall in love with her and yet she speaks evil of you. She reproaches me for having yielded so easily and boasts that you would not succeed so readily with her."

"Say no more, we must punish her; the younger shall come."

"I am much obliged to you."

"Does she know that we love each other?"

"I have never told her, but she has guessed it and pities me. She wants me to join her in a devotion to Our Lady of Solitude, the effect of which would be a complete cure for both of us."

"Then she is in love, too?"

"Yes, and she is unhappy in her love, for it is not returned. That must be a great grief."

"I pity her, and yet, with such a face, I do not know any man who would take compassion on her. The poor girl ought not have any need of love. But as for you . . ."

"Say nothing about me; my danger is greater than hers. I am forced to defend myself or to give in and God knows there are some men whom it is impossible to ward off! God is my witness that in Holy Week I went to a poor girl with the smallpox and touched her, in the hope of catching it and so losing my beauty; but God would not have it so and my confessor blamed me, bidding me do a penance I had never expected."

"Tell me what it is."

"He told me that a handsome face is the index of a handsome soul and is a gift of God for which a woman should render thanks continually; that, in attempting to destroy this beauty, I had sinned, for I had endeavoured to destroy God's handiwork. After a good deal of rebuke in this style, he ordered me to put a little rouge on my cheeks whenever I felt myself looking pale. I had to submit and I have bought a pot of rouge, but hitherto I have not felt obliged to use it. Indeed, my father might notice it and I should not like to tell him it is done by way of penance."

"Is your confessor a young man?"

"He is an old man of seventy."

"Do you tell him all your sins without reserve?"

"Certainly, for the smallest circumstance may be really a great sin."

"Does he ask you questions?"

"No, for he sees that I am telling him the whole truth. It is a great trial, but I have to submit to it."

"Have you had this confessor long?"

"Two years. Before him I had a confessor who was quite unbearable. He asked me questions which made me quite indignant."

"What questions were they?"

"You must please excuse me from telling you."

"Why do you go to confession so often?"

cluded that they believe the pleasure to outbalance the pain and so it is clearly the woman who has the better share in the enjoyment.

In spite of this, if I had the choice of being born again as a woman, I should say "no," in spite of my voluptuousness, for I have pleasures which a woman cannot enjoy and which make me prefer to be a man. Though, indeed, for the rare privilege of being born again, I would consent, not only to be a woman, but even an animal of any species, provided always I had my memory, for without that I would no longer be myself.

We had some ices and my two companions returned home with me, well pleased with the enjoyment I had given them without offending God.

Donna Ignazia, who was delighted with my continence during the day and apparently afraid of its not lasting, begged me to invite her cousin to supper. I agreed and even did so with pleasure.

The cousin was ugly and also a fool, but she had a good heart and was sympathetic. I knew that Donna Ignazia had told her all and, as she was no restraint on me, I did not mind her being at supper, while Ignazia looked upon her as a safeguard.

The table had been laid for three when I heard a step coming up the stairs. It was the father and I asked him to sup with us. Don Diego was a pleasant man, as I have said, but what amused me most of all about him was his moral maxims. He knew, or suspected, that I was fond of his daughter, though in an honourable way; he thought my honour, or his daughter's piety, would be a sufficient safeguard. If he had suspected what had already happened, I think he would have been deeply offended and would never have allowed her to be alone with me.

He sat beside his niece and facing his daughter and did most of the talking, for your Spaniard, though grave, is eloquent and fond of hearing the fine harmonies of his native tongue. It was very hot, so I asked him to take off his waistcoat and to tell his daughter to do just as she would if only he and his wife had been present. Donna Ignazia had not to be entreated long before she took off her kerchief, but the poor cousin did not like having to show us her bones and swarthy skin.

Donna Ignazia told her father how much she had enjoyed herself, and how they had seen the Duchess of Villadorias, who had asked me to come to see her. The good man began to philosophise and to jest on her malady and he told me some stories germane to the question, which the girls pretended not to understand.

The good wine of La Mancha kept us at table till a late hour and the time seemed to pass very quickly. Don Diego told his niece she could sleep with his daughter in the room we were in, as the bed was big enough for two. I hastened to add that, if the young ladies would do so, I should be delighted; but Donna Ignazia blushed and said it would not do, as the room was separated from mine only by a glass door.

At this, I smiled at Don Diego, who proceeded to harangue his daughter in a manner which amused me extremely. He told her I was at least twenty years older than she and that, in suspecting me, she had

committed a greater sin than if she had allowed me to take some slight liberty.

"I am sure," he added, "that, when you go to confession next Sunday, you will forget to accuse yourself of having wrongfully suspected Don Jaime of a dishonourable action."

Donna Ignazia looked at me affectionately, asked my pardon and said she would do whatever her father liked. The cousin said nothing and the father kissed his daughter, bade me a good night and went away, well pleased with the harangue he had delivered.

I suspected that Donna Ignazia expected me to make some attempt on her honour and, feeling sure she would resist for the sake of appearances, I determined to leave her in peace. Next morning I got up and went into their room, in the hope of playing some trick on them. However, the birds were flown and I had no doubt they had gone to hear mass.

Donna Ignazia came home by herself at ten o'clock. She found me alone, dressed and writing. She told me she had been in church three hours.

"You have been to confession, I suppose?"

"No; I went last Sunday and I shall wait till next Sunday."

"I am very glad your confession will not be lengthened by any sins I have helped you to commit."

"You are wrong."

"Wrong? I understand; but you must know that I am not going to be damned for mere desires. I do not wish to torment you or to become a martyr myself. What you granted me has made me fall deeply in love with you and it makes me shudder when I imagine that our love has become a subject of repentance with you. I have had a bad night; and it is time for me to think of my health. I must forget you but, to bring that about I must see you no longer. I will retain the house, but I will not live in it. If your religion is an intelligent one, you will approve of my idea. Tell your confessor of it next Sunday and you will see that he will approve."

"You are right, but I cannot agree to it. You can go away if you like and I shall say nothing, but I shall be the most unhappy girl in all Madrid."

As she spoke these words, two big tears rolled down her cheeks and her face fell; I was profoundly moved.

"I love you, dearest Ignazia, and I hope not to be damned for my love. I cannot see you without loving you and to this love some positive proof is essential; otherwise, I am unhappy. If I go, you say you will be unhappy and, if I stay, it is I who will be unhappy; my health will be ruined. But tell me which I shall do, stay or go? Say."

"Stay."

"Then you must be as loving and tender as you were before."

"Alas!" I promised to commit that sin no more. I tell you to stay because I am sure that in eight or ten days we shall have become so accustomed to one another that I shall be able to love you like a father

and you will be able to take me in your arms without any amorous sentiments."

"Are you sure of this?"

"Yes, dearest, quite sure."

"You are mistaken."

"Let me be mistaken and, believe me, I shall be glad to be mistaken."

"What an unfortunate religion!"

"Why 'unfortunate'?"

"Nothing, nothing. I might be too long, I might perhaps endanger . . . let us say no more about it. I will stay."

I went out, more pained with her state than with my own, and I felt that the best thing I could do would be to forget her. "For," said I to myself, "even if I do enjoy her again by taking her by surprise or inflaming her with my remarks, Sunday will come again; she will confess and repent and I shall have to begin all over again. She admits her love and flatters herself that she will be able to subdue it, a foolish hope, which could exist only in a mind under the dominion of prejudice."

I came home at noon and Don Diego dined with me; his daughter did not appear till the dessert. I begged her politely but coldly to sit down. Her father asked her jestingly if I had paid her a visit in the night.

"I never suspected Don Jaime of such a thing," she replied, "and I objected only out of shyness."

I interrupted her by praising her modesty and telling her she would have done quite right to beware of me if my sense of duty had not been stronger than any voluptuous desires inspired by her charms. Don Diego pronounced this declaration of love as good as anything to be found in the *Morte d'Arthur*. His daughter said I was laughing at her, but Don Diego said he was certain I was in earnest and that I had known her before taking her to the ball.

"You are utterly mistaken," said Donna Ignazia, with some degree of fire.

"Your father is wiser than you, señora," I replied.

"What! How and when did you see me?"

"At Our Lady of Solitude, where I was hearing mass and you had just communicated. When you went out with your cousin, I followed you at some distance; you can guess the rest."

She was speechless and her father enjoyed the consciousness of his perspicacity.

"I am going to see the bullfight," said he. "It's a fine day and all Madrid will be there, so one must go early to get a good place. I advise you to go, as you have never seen a bullfight, ask Don Jaime to take you with him, Ignazia."

"Would you like to have my companionship?" said she, tenderly.

"Certainly I would, but you must bring your cousin, as I am in love with her."

Don Diego burst out laughing, but Ignazia said slyly, "That is not so impossible after all."

We went to see the splendid but barbarous spectacle in which Spaniards take so much delight. The two girls sat in front in the only vacant box and I sat behind on the second bench, which was a foot and a half higher than the first. There were already two ladies there and, much to my amusement, one of them was the famous Duchess of Villadorias. She was in front of me and sat in such a position that her head was almost between my legs. She recognised me and said we were fortunate in meeting and then, noticing Donna Ignazia, who was close to her, she congratulated me in French on her charms and asked me whether she was my mistress or my wife. I replied that she was a beauty before whom I sighed in vain. She replied with a smile that she was rather a sceptical person, and, turning to Donna Ignazia, she began a pleasant and amorous discourse, thinking the girl to be as learned in the laws of love as herself. She whispered something in her ear which made Ignazia blush, and the duchess, becoming enthusiastic, told me I had chosen the handsomest girl in Madrid and that she would be delighted to see us both at her country house.

I promised to come, as I was obliged to do, but I begged to be excused from naming the day. Nevertheless, she made me promise to call on her at four o'clock the next day, telling me, much to my terror, that she would be alone. She was rather pretty but too notorious a character and such a visit would have given rise to talk.

Happily, the fight began and silence became general, for the Spaniards are passionately devoted to bullfighting.

So much has been written on the subject that I will not weary the reader with a detailed account of the fight. I may say that the sport is in my opinion a most barbarous one and likely to operate unfavourably on the national morals; the arena is sometimes drenched in the blood of bulls and horses and even of the unfortunate *picadores* and *matadores*, whose sole defence is the red rag with which they irritate the bull.

When it was over, I escorted the girls, who had enjoyed themselves immensely, back to the house and had the ugly cousin stay to supper, as I foresaw that they would again sleep together.

We supped together, but it was a melancholy affair, for Don Diego was away and I did not feel in the humour to amuse my company.

Donna Ignazia became pensive when, in reply to a question of hers, I said that it would be absolutely rude of me not to go to the duchess's.

"You will come with me some day," I added, "to dine at her country house."

"You need not look for that."

"Why not?"

"Because she is a madwoman. She talked to me in a way that would have offended me if I had not known that she fancied she was honouring me by laying aside her rank."

We rose from the table and, after I had dismissed my man, we sat

on the balcony to wait for Don Diego and enjoy the delicious evening breezes. As we sat near to each other in the twilight, so favourable to lovers' vows, I looked into Donna Ignazia's eyes and saw that my hour had come. I clasped her to me with one arm; I clung with my lips to hers and, by the way she trembled, I guessed the flame which consumed her.

"Shall you go to see the duchess?"

"No, if you will promise me not to go to confession next Sunday."

"But what will my confessor say if I do not go?"

"Nothing at all if he understands his business. But let us talk it over a little."

We were so tightly clasped together that the cousin, like a good girl, left us and went to the other end of the balcony, taking care to look away from us.

I asked if she felt in the humour to repent of the sin she was ready to commit.

"I was not thinking of repentance just then but, since you remind me of it, I must tell you that I shall certainly go to confession."

"And, after you have been to confession, will you love me as you love me now?"

"I hope God will give me strength to offend Him no more."

"I assure you that, if you continue loving me, God will not give you grace, yet I feel sure that on Sunday evening you will refuse me that which you are now ready to grant."

"Indeed I will, sweetheart; but why should we talk of that now?"

"Because, if I abandon myself to pleasure now, I shall be more in love with you than ever and consequently more unhappy than ever when the day of your repentance comes. So promise me that you will not go to confession whilst I remain in Madrid—or else give the fatal order now and bid me leave you. I cannot abandon myself to love to-day, knowing that it will be refused me on Sunday."

As I remonstrated thus, I clasped her affectionately in my arms, caressing her most ardently; but, before coming to the decisive action, I asked her again whether she would promise not to go to confession the next Sunday.

"You are cruel," said she. "I cannot make you that promise for my conscience' sake."

At this reply, which I had quite expected, I remained motionless, feeling sure that she must be in a state of desperate irritation.

Donna Ignazia was indeed in a terrible state; I had not repulsed her, but I was perfectly inactive. Modesty prevented her asking me openly to continue, but she redoubled her caresses, reproaching me with my cruelty. I do not know whether I could have held out much longer, but just then the cousin turned round and told us that Don Diego was coming in.

The cousin came and sat beside us again and Don Diego, after making a few remarks, left us on the balcony, wishing us good night. I might have begun over again, but I clung to my system of repression

and, after wishing the girls good night with a melancholy air, I went to bed.

I hoped Donna Ignazia would repent and come and keep me company, but I was disappointed. They left their room early in the morning and at noon Don Diego came to dine with me, saying his daughter had such a bad headache that she had not even gone to mass.

"We must get her to eat something," I remarked.

"No, I think abstinence will do her good and in the evening I daresay she will be able to sup with you."

I went to keep her company at her bedside after I had taken my siesta. I did my best for three hours to convince her of her folly, but she kept her eyes closed and said nothing, only sighing when I said something very touching.

I left her to walk in Saint Jerome's Park, and told her that, if she did not sup with me, I would understand that she did not wish to see me again. This threat had its effect. She came to table at supper-time but looked pale and exhausted. She ate little and said nothing, for she knew not what to say. I saw that she was suffering and I pitied her from my heart.

Before going to bed, she asked if I had been to see the duchess. She seemed somewhat cheered when I answered in the negative. I told her she might satisfy herself of the truth of my reply by asking Philippe, who had taken my note begging Her Grace to excuse me for that day.

"But you will go another day?"

"No, dearest, because I see it would grieve you."

She gave a sigh of content and I embraced her gently and she left me as sad as she was herself.

I could see that what I asked of her was a great deal, but I had good grounds for hope, as I knew her ardent disposition. It was not God and I that were disputing for her, but her confessor and I. If she had not been a Catholic, I should have won her the first day. She had told me that she would get into trouble with her confessor if she did not go to him as usual; she had too much of fine Spanish honour in her to tell him what was not true or to endeavour to combine her love with what she believed she owed to her religion.

Friday and Saturday passed without any events of consequence. Her father, who could not blind himself to our love any longer, trusted, I suppose, to his daughter's virtue and made her dine and sup with me every day. On Saturday evening Donna Ignazia left me sadder than ever and turned her head away when I would have kissed her as usual.

I saw what was the matter; she was going to communicate the next day. I admired her consistency, in spite of myself, and pitied her heartily, for I could guess the storm that must be raging in her breast. I began to repent having demanded all and wished I had been content with a little.

Wanting to be satisfied with my own eyes, I got up early Sunday morning and followed Donna Ignazia. I knew she would call for her cousin, so I went on to the church and placed myself by the sacristy door, where I could see without being seen. I waited a quarter of an hour; then they came in and, after kneeling down for a few moments, separated, each going to her own confessor. I watched only Donna Ignazia; I saw her go into the confessional and the confessor turn towards her. I waited patiently. I thought the confession would never come to an end. "What is he saying?" I repeated to myself, as I saw the confessor speaking to her now and again.

I could bear it no longer and was on the point of going away, when I saw her rise from her knees. Looking like a saint, she came to kneel in the church, but out of my sight. I thought she would come forward to receive the Holy Communion at the end of the mass that was being said but, instead of that, she went towards the door, rejoined her cousin and they left the church.

I was astonished. My heart was seized with a pang of remorse.

"It's all over," I said to myself. "The poor girl has made a sincere and full confession; she has avowed her love and the priest's cruel duty has made him refuse her absolution. All is lost. What will come of it? My peace of mind and hers require me to leave her. Wretch that I am, to have risked all for all! I should have made allowance for the peculiar Spanish character. I might have enjoyed her by surprise now and again; the difficulty would have added piquancy to the intrigue. I have behaved as if I were once more twenty and I have lost everything. At dinner she will be all sad and tearful. I must find some way out of this terrible situation."

Thus soliloquising, I arrived home, ill-pleased with the line of conduct I had adopted. My hairdresser was waiting for me, but I sent him away and told my cook not to serve dinner till I ordered it; then, feeling the need of rest, I flung myself on my bed and slept profoundly till one o'clock. I got up and ordered dinner to be brought in and sent a message to the father and daughter that I was awaiting them.

My surprise may be imagined when Donna Ignazia appeared in a costume of black velvet, adorned with ribbons and lace. In my opinion, there is no more seductive costume in Europe when the wearer is pretty. I also noticed that every feature of her face breathed peace and calm; I had never seen her looking so well and I could not help congratulating her. She replied with a smile and I gave her a kiss, which she took as meekly as a lamb. Philippe appeared and we sat down to table. I saw that my fair sweetheart had crossed the Rubicon; the day was won.

"I am going to be happy," said I to myself, "but let us say nothing and it will come of itself."

However, I did not conceal my bliss and made love to her whenever the servant was out of the room. She was not only submissive but even ardent. Before we left the table, she asked me if I still loved her.

"More than ever, darling; I adore you."

"Then take me to the bullfight."

"Quick! Fetch the hairdresser."

When my hair was done, I made an elaborate toilette and, burning with impatience, we set out on foot, as I was afraid we should not secure a good place if we waited till the carriage was ready. We found a fine box with only two persons in it and Ignazia, after glancing round, said she was glad the detestable duchess was not anywhere near us.

After some fine sport my mistress begged me to take her to the Prado, where all the best people in Madrid are to be seen. She leant on my arm, seemed proud to be thought mine and filled me with delight.

All at once we met the Venetian ambassador and his favourite, Manucci. They had just arrived from Aranjuez. We greeted each other with due Spanish politeness and the ambassador paid me a high compliment on the beauty of my companion. Donna Ignazia pretended not to understand but she pressed my arm with Spanish delicacy. After walking a short distance with us, M. de Mocenigo said he hoped I would dine with him on the following day and, after I had nodded acquiescence in the French style, we parted.

Towards evening we took some ices and returned home and the gentle pressure of my arm on the way prepared me for the bliss I was to enjoy.

We found Don Diego on the balcony, waiting for us. He congratulated his daughter on her pleasant appearance and on the pleasure she must have taken in my society. Charmed with his good humour, I asked him to sup with us and he accepted and amused us with his witty conversation and a multitude of little tales that pleased me exceedingly. He made the following speech on leaving us, which I give word for word, but I cannot give the reader any idea of the inimitable Spanish gravity with which it was delivered:

"*Amigo* señor Don Jaime, I leave you here to enjoy the cool air with my daughter. I am delighted at your loving her and you may be assured that I shall place no obstacle in the way of your becoming my son-in-law as soon as you can show your titles of nobility."

When he was gone, I said to his daughter:

"I should be only too happy, if it could be managed; but you must know that in my country only they are called nobles who have an hereditary right to rule the state. If I had been born in Spain, I should be noble but, as it is, I adore you and I hope you will make me happy."

"Yes, dearest, but we must be happy together; I cannot suffer any infidelity."

"I give you my word of honour that I will be wholly faithful to you."

"Come then, *corazón mío*, let us go in."

"No, let us put out the lights and stay here a quarter of an hour. Tell me, my angel, whence comes this unexpected happiness?"

"You owe it to a piece of tyranny which drove me to desperation. God is good and I am sure He would not have me become my own executioner. When I told my confessor that I could not help loving you but could restrain myself from all excess of love, he replied that this self-confidence was misplaced, as I had already fallen. He wanted me to promise never to be alone with you again and, on my refusing to do so, he would not give me absolution. I have never had such a piece of shame cast on me, but I laid it all in the hands of God and said, 'Thy will be done.'

"Whilst I was hearing mass, I made up my mind and, as long as you love me, I shall be yours, and yours only. When you leave Spain and abandon me to despair, I shall find another confessor. My conscience holds me guiltless; this is my comfort. My cousin, to whom I have told all, is astonished, but then, she is not very clever."

After this declaration, which put me quite at my ease and would have relieved me of any scruples if I had had them, I took her to my bed. In the morning she left me more in love with her than ever.

CHAPTER 128

IF these *Memoirs*, written only to console me in the dreadful *ennui* which is slowly killing me in Bohemia—and which, perhaps, would kill me anywhere, since, though my body is old, my spirit and my desires are as young as ever—if these *Memoirs* are ever read, I repeat, they will be read only when I am gone and all censure will be lost on me. Nevertheless, seeing that men are divided into two sections, the one—and by far the greater—composed of the ignorant and superficial, and the other of the learned and reflective, I beg to state that it is to the latter I would appeal. Their judgment, I believe, will be in favour of my veracity and, indeed, why should I not be veracious? A man can have no object in deceiving himself and it is chiefly for myself that I write.

Hitherto I have spoken nothing but the truth without considering whether the truth is in my favour or no. My book is not a work on dogmatic theology, but I do not think it will do harm to anyone, while I fancy that those who know how to imitate the bee and get honey from every flower will be able to extract some good from the catalogue of my vices and virtues.

After this digression (it may be too long, but that is my business and none other's) I must confess that never have I had so unpleasant a truth to set down as that which I am going to relate. I committed a fatal act of indiscretion—an act which, after all these years, still gives my heart a pang as I think of it.

The day after my conquest, I dined with the Venetian ambassador and had the pleasure of hearing that all the ministers and grandees

with whom I had associated had the highest possible opinion of me. In three or four days the King, the Royal Family and the ministers would return to town and I expected to have daily conferences with the latter respecting the colony in the Sierra Morena, where I would most probably be going. Manucci, who continued to treat me as a valued friend, proposed to accompany me on my journey and would bring with him an adventuress who called herself Porto-Carrero, pretending to be the daughter or niece of the late cardinal of that name, and thus obtained a good deal of consideration, though, in reality, she was only the mistress of the French consul at Madrid, the Abbé Bigliardi.

Such was the promising state of my prospects when my evil genius brought to Madrid a native of Liège, Baron de Fraiture, chief huntsman of the principality and a profligate, a gamester and a cheat, like all those who proclaim their belief in his honesty nowadays.

I had unfortunately met him at Spa and told him I was going to Portugal. He had come after me, hoping to use me as a means of getting into good society and of filling his pocket with the money of the dupes he aspired to make.

Gamesters have never had any proof of my belonging to their infernal clique, but they have always persisted in believing that I, too, am a "Greek."

As soon as this baron heard that I was in Madrid, he called on me and by dint of politeness obliged me to receive him. I thought any small civilities I might show or introductions I might give could do me no harm. He had a travelling companion, to whom he introduced me—a fat, ignorant fellow, but a Frenchman and therefore agreeable. A Frenchman who knows how to present himself, who is well dressed and has the society air is usually accepted without demur or scrutiny. This one had been a cavalry captain but had been fortunate enough to obtain an everlasting furlough.

Four or five days after his appearance the baron asked me quite frankly to lend him a score of louis, as he was hard up. I replied as frankly, thanking him for treating me as a friend but informing him that I really could not lend him the money, as I needed what little I had for my own necessities.

"But we can do good business together and you cannot possibly be moneyless."

"I do not know anything about 'good business,' but I do know that I need my money and cannot part with it."

"We are at our wits' end to quiet our landlord; come and speak to him."

"If I were to do so, I should do you more harm than good. He would ask me if I would answer for you and I should reply that you are one of those noblemen who stand in need of no surety. All the same, the landlord would think that, if I did not stand your surety, it must be from my entertaining doubts as to your solvency."

I had introduced Fraiture to Count Manucci on the Prado and he

requested me to take him to see the count, to which request I was foolish enough to accede. A few days later, the baron opened his soul to Manucci. He found the Venetian disposed to be obliging, but wary. He refused to lend money himself but introduced the baron to someone who lent him money on pledges, without interest.

The baron and his friend did a little gaming and won a little money, but I held aloof from them to the best of my ability. I had my Swiss colony and Donna Ignazia and wanted to live peacefully and, if I had spent a single night away from home, the innocent girl would have been filled with alarm.

About that time, M. de Mocenigo went as ambassador to France and was replaced by M. Querini. Querini was a man of letters, while Mocenigo liked only music and his own peculiar kind of love. The new ambassador was distinctly favourable to me, and in a few days I had reason to believe that he would do more for me than ever Mocenigo would have done.

In the meanwhile, the baron and his friend began to think of beating a retreat to France. There was no gaming at the ambassador's and no gaming at the Court; they must return to France, but they owed money to their landlord and they needed money for the journey. I could give them nothing; Manucci would give them nothing; we both pitied them, but our duty to ourselves made us cruel to everyone else. However, the baron brought trouble on us.

One morning Manucci came to see me in evident perturbation.

"What is the matter?" said I.

"I do not know exactly. For the last week I have refused to see Baron de Fraiture, as, not being able to lend him money, his presence only wearied me. He has written me a letter in which he threatens to blow out his brains to-day if I will not lend him a hundred pistoles."

"He said the same thing to me three days ago, but I replied that I would bet two hundred pistoles that he would do nothing of the kind. This made him angry and he proposed to fight a duel with me, but I declined, on the plea that, as he was a desperate man, either he would have an advantage over me or I over him. Give him the same answer or, better still, no answer at all."

"I cannot follow your advice. Here are the hundred pistoles. Take them to him and get a receipt."

I admired his generosity and agreed to carry out his commission. I called on the baron, who seemed rather uncomfortable when I walked in; but, considering his position, I was not at all surprised. I informed him that I was the bearer of a thousand francs from Count Manucci, who thereby placed him in a position to arrange his affairs and leave Madrid. He received the money without any signs of pleasure, surprise or gratitude and wrote out the receipt. He assured me that he and his friend would start for Barcelona and France on the following day.

I then took the document to Manucci, who was evidently suffering from some mental trouble, and I remained to dinner with the ambassador. It was the last time.

Three days later I went to dine with the ambassadors (for they all dined together) but, to my astonishment, the porter told me he had received orders not to admit me. The effect of this sentence on me was like that of a thunderbolt; I returned home like a man in a dream. I immediately sat down and wrote to Manucci, asking him why I had been subjected to such an insult; but Philippe, my man, brought me back the letter unopened. This was another surprise; I did not know what to expect next.

"What can be the matter?" I said to myself. "I cannot imagine, but I will have an explanation or perish."

I dined sadly with Donna Ignazia without telling her the cause of my trouble and, just as I was going to take my siesta, a servant of Manucci's brought me a letter from his master and fled before I could read it. The letter contained an enclosure, which I read first. It was from Baron de Fraiture. He asked Manucci to lend him a hundred pistoles, promising to show him the man whom he held for his dearest friend to be his worst enemy.

Manucci (honouring me, by the way, with the title of "Ungrateful Traitor") said that the baron's letter had excited his curiosity and he had met him in Saint Jerome's Park, where the baron had clearly proved this enemy to be myself, since I had informed the baron that, though the name of Manucci was genuine, the title of count was quite apocryphal. After recapitulating the information which Fraiture had given him and which could have proceeded only from me, he advised me to leave Madrid as soon as possible—in a week at the latest.

I can give the reader no idea of the shock this letter gave me. For the first time in my life I had to confess myself guilty of folly, ingratitude and crime. I felt that my fault was beyond forgiveness and did not think of asking Manucci to pardon me; I could do nothing but despair.

Nevertheless, in spite of Manucci's just indignation, I could not help seeing that he had made a mistake in advising me in so insulting a manner to leave Madrid in a week. The young man might have known that my self-respect would forbid my following such a piece of advice. He could compel me to obey his counsel or command and to leave Madrid would have been to commit a second baseness worse than the first.

A prey to grief, I spent the day without taking any steps one way or the other and I went to bed without supping and without the company of Donna Ignazia.

After a sound sleep I got up and wrote to the friend whom I had offended a sincere and humble confession of my fault. I concluded my letter by saying that I hoped that this evidence of my sincere and heartfelt repentance would suffice, but, if not, I was ready to give him any honourable satisfaction in my power.

"You may," I said, "have me assassinated if you like, but I shall not leave Madrid till it suits me to do so."

I put a commonplace seal on my letter and had the address written by Philippe, whose hand was unknown to Manucci, and then I sent it to the royal post-office at Pardo, where the King had gone.

I kept my room the whole day and Donna Ignazia, seeing that I had recovered my spirits to some degree, made no more inquiries about the cause of my distress. I waited in the whole of the next day, expecting a reply, but in vain.

The third day, being Sunday, I went out to call on the Prince de la Catolica. My carriage stopped at his door, but the porter came out and told me in a polite whisper that His Highness had his reasons for not receiving me any longer. This was an unexpected blow, but after it I was prepared for anything.

I drove to the Abbé Bigliardi, but the lackey, after taking in my name, informed me that his master was out. I got into my carriage and went to Varnier, who said he wanted to speak to me.

"Come into my carriage," said I. "We will go and hear mass together."

On our way, he told me that the Venetian ambassador, Mocenigo, had warned the Duke of Medina-Sidonia that I was a dangerous character.

"The duke," he added, "replied that he would cease to know you as soon as he found out the badness of your character himself."

These three shocks, following in such quick succession, threw me into a state of confusion. I said nothing till we heard mass together, but I believe that, if I had not then told him the whole story, I should have had an apoplectic fit.

Varnier pitied me and said:

"Such are the ways of the great when they have abjured all virtue and honesty. Nevertheless, I advise you to keep silence about it, unless you would irritate Manucci still farther."

When I got home, I wrote to Manucci, begging him to suspend his vengeance, or else I should be obliged to tell the story to all those who insulted me for the ambassador's sake. I sent the letter to M. Soderini, the secretary of the embassy, feeling sure that he would forward it to Manucci.

I dined with my mistress and took her to the bullfight, where I chanced to find myself in a box adjoining that in which Manucci and the two ambassadors were seated. I made them a bow which they were obliged to return, and did not vouchsafe them another glance for the rest of the spectacle.

The next day the Marquis Grimaldi refused to receive me and I saw that I should have to abandon all hope. The Duke of Lossada remained my friend, on account of his dislike for the ambassador and his unnatural tastes; but he told me that he had been requested not to receive me and that he did not think I had the slightest chance of obtaining any employment at Court.

I could scarcely believe in such an extremity of vengeance; Manucci was making a parade of the influence he possessed over his "wife," the ambassador. In his insane desire for revenge he had laid all shame aside.

I was curious to know whether he had forgotten Don Manuel de Roda and the Marquis de las Moras; I found both of them had been

forewarned against me. There was still the Count of Aranda, and I was just going to see him when a servant of His Highness came and told me that his master wished to see me. I shuddered, for, in my then state of mind, I drew the most sinister conclusions from the message.

I found the great man alone, looking perfectly calm. This made me pluck up heart. He asked me to sit down—a favour he had not hitherto done me—and this further contributed to cheer me.

“What have you been doing to offend your ambassador?” he began.

“My lord, I have done nothing to him directly but, by an inexcusable act of stupidity, I have wounded his dear friend Manucci in his tenderest part. With the most innocent intentions, I reposed my confidence in a cowardly fellow, who sold it to Manucci for a hundred pistoles. In his irritation Manucci has stirred up against me the powerful statesman who idolises him and obeys his every wish.”

“You have been unwise, but what is done is done. I am sorry for you, because this puts an end to all your hopes of advancement. The first thing the King would do would be to make enquiries about you of your ambassador.”

“I feel it to my sorrow, my lord, but must I leave Madrid?”

“No. The ambassador did his best to make me send you away, but I told him I had no power over you so long as you did not infringe the laws.

“‘He has calumniated a Venetian subject whom I am bound to protect,’ said he.

“‘In that case,’ I replied, ‘you can resort to the ordinary law, and punish him to the best of your ability.’

“The ambassador finally begged me to order you not to mention the matter to any Venetian subjects in Madrid and I think you can safely promise me this.”

“My lord, I have much pleasure in giving your excellency my word of honour not to do so.”

“Very good. Then you can stay in Madrid as long as you please; and, indeed, Mocenigo will be leaving in the course of a week.”

From that moment, I made up my mind to amuse myself without any thought of obtaining a position in Spain. However, the ties of friendship made me keep up my acquaintance with Varnier, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia and the architect, Sabatini, who always gave me a warm welcome, as did his wife.

Donna Ignazia had more of my company than ever and congratulated me on my freedom from the cares of business.

After the departure of Mocenigo, I thought I would go and see if Querini, his nephew, was equally prejudiced against me. The porter told me he had received orders not to admit me and I laughed in the man’s face.

Six or seven weeks after Manucci’s departure I, too, left Madrid I did so under compulsion, in spite of my love for Ignazia, for I had no longer hopes of doing anything in Portugal and my purse was nearly exhausted.

I thought of selling a handsome repeater and a gold snuffbox so as to enable me to get to Marseilles, whence I thought of going to Constantinople and trying my fortune there, without turning renegade. Doubtless I should have found the plan unsuccessful, for I was attaining an age when Fortune flies. I had no reason, however, to complain of Fortune, for she had been lavish in her gifts to me and I, in my turn, had always abused them.

In my state of distress, the learned Abbé Pinzi introduced me to a Genoese bookseller named Carrado, a thoroughly honest man, who seemed to have been created that the knavery of most of the Genoese might be pardoned. To him I took my watch and snuffbox, but the worthy Carrado not only refused to buy them but would not take them in pledge. He gave me seventeen hundred francs, with no other security than my word that I would repay him if I were ever able to do so. Unhappily, I have never been able to repay this debt, unless my gratitude be accounted repayment.

As nothing is sweeter than the companionship between a man and the woman he adores, so nothing is bitterer than their separation; the pleasure has vanished away and only the pain remains.

I spent my last days in Madrid drinking the cup of pleasure, which was embittered by the thought of the pain that was to follow. The worthy Diego was sad at the thought of losing me and could with difficulty refrain from tears.

For some time, my man Philippe continued to send me news of Donna Ignazia. She became the bride of a rich shoemaker, though her father was extremely mortified by her making a marriage so much beneath her station.

I had promised the Marquis de las Moras and Colonel Royas that I would come and see them at Saragossa, the capital of Aragon, and I arrived there at the beginning of September. My stay lasted a fortnight, during which time I was able to examine the manners and customs of the Aragonese, who were not subject to the ordinances of the Marquis of Aranda, as long cloaks and low hats were to be seen at every corner. They looked like dark phantoms more than men, for the cloak covered up at least half the face. Underneath the cloak was carried *el espadin*, a sword of enormous length. Persons who wore this costume were treated with greatest respect, though they were mostly arrant rogues, still they might possibly be powerful noblemen in disguise.

The visitor to Saragossa should see the devotion which is paid to Our Lady del Pilar. I have seen processions going along the streets in which wooden statues of gigantic proportions were carried. I was taken to the best assemblies, where the monks swarmed. I was introduced to a lady of monstrous size, who, I was informed, was cousin to the famous Palafox and I did not feel my bosom swell with pride, as was evidently expected. I also made the acquaintance of Canon Pignatelli, a man of Italian origin. He was President of the Inquisition and every morning he imprisoned the procuress who had furnished him with the girl with whom he had supped and slept. He would wake up in the

morning, tired out with the pleasures of the night; the girl would be driven away and the procuress imprisoned. He then dressed, confessed, said mass and, after an excellent breakfast with plenty of good wine, he would send out for another girl, and this would go on day after day. Nevertheless, he was held in great respect at Saragossa, for he was a monk, a canon and an Inquisitor.

The bullfights were finer in Saragossa than in Madrid—that is to say, they were deadlier and the chief interest of this barbarous spectacle lies in the shedding of blood. The Marquis de las Moras and Colonel Royas gave me some excellent dinners. The marquis was one of the pleasantest men I met in Spain; he died very young two years after.

The Church of Nuestra Señora del Pilar is situated on the ramparts of the town and the Aragonese fondly believe this portion of the town defences to be impregnable.

I had promised Donna Pelliccia to go and see her in Valencia and on my way I saw the ancient town of Saguntum on a hill at some little distance. There was a priest travelling with me and I told him and the driver (who preferred his mules to all the antiquities in the world) that I should like to go and see the town. How the muleteer and the priest objected to this proposal!

"There are only ruins there, señor."

"That's just what I want to see."

"We shall never get to Valencia to-night."

"Here's a crown; we shall get there to-morrow."

The crown settled everything and the man exclaimed, "*Valgame Dios, es un hombre de buen!*" (So help me God, this is an honest man!) A subject of His Catholic Majesty knows no heartier praise than this.

I saw the massive walls still standing and in good condition and yet they were built during the second Punic War. I saw on two of the gateways inscriptions which to me were meaningless, but which Séguier, the old friend of the Marquis Maffei, could no doubt have deciphered.

The sight of this monument to the courage of an ancient race, who preferred to perish in the flames rather than surrender, excited my awe and admiration. The priest laughed at me, and I am sure he would not have purchased this venerable city of the dead if he could have done so by saying a mass. The very name has perished; instead of Saguntum it is called Murviedro from the Latin *muri veteres* (old walls); but Time, that destroys marble and brass, destroys also the very memory of what has been.

"This place," said the priest, "has always been called Murviedro."

"That is not possible," I replied. "Common sense forbids our believing that they began by naming 'old' something which must originally have been new. That's as if you should tell me that New Castille is really not old because it is called 'new.'"

"Well, Old Castille is more ancient than New Castille."

"Not so. New Castille was called so only because it was the later conquest; but, as a matter of fact, it is the older of the two."

The poor priest took refuge in silence, shaking his head and evidently taking me for a madman.

I tried vainly to find Hannibal's head and the inscription in honour of Claudius Cæsar, but I found the remains of the amphitheatre. The next day I remarked the mosaic pavement, which had been discovered twenty years before.

I reached Valencia at nine o'clock in the morning and found that I should have to content myself with a bad lodging, as Marescalchi, the opera manager, had taken all the best rooms for the members of his company. Marescalchi was accompanied by his brother, a priest, whom I found decidedly learned for his age. We took a walk together and he laughed when I proposed going into a café, for there was not such a thing in town. There were only taverns of the lowest class, where the wine is not fit to drink. I could scarcely believe it, but Spain is a peculiar country. When I was in Valencia, a good bottle of wine was scarcely obtainable, though Malaga and Alicante were both close at hand.

In the first three days of my stay in Valencia, (the birthplace of Alexander VI) I saw all the objects of interest in the town and was confirmed in my idea that what seems so admirable in the descriptions of writers and the pictures of artists loses much of its charm on actual inspection.

Though Valencia is blessed with an excellent climate, though it is well watered, situated in the midst of beautiful country, fertile in all the choicest products of nature, though it is the residence of many of the most distinguished of the Spanish nobility, though its women are the handsomest in Spain, though it has the advantage of being the seat of an archbishop, in spite of all these commodities, it is a most disagreeable town to live in. One is ill-lodged and ill-fed, there is no good wine and no good company; there is not even any intellectual provision, for, though there is a university, lettered men are absolutely unknown.

As for the bridges, churches, the arsenal, the exchange, the town hall, the twelve town gates and the rest, I could not take pleasure in a town where the streets are not paved and where a public promenade is conspicuous by its absence. Outside the town the country is delightful, especially on the side towards the sea; but the outside is not the inside.

The feature which pleased me most was the number of small one-horse vehicles which transport the traveller rapidly from one point to another at a very slight expense and will even undertake a two or three days' journey.

If my frame of mind had been a more pleasant one, I would have travelled through the kingdoms of Murcia and Granada, which surpass Italy in beauty and fertility.

Poor Spaniards! This beauty and fertility of your land is the cause

of your ignorance, just as the mines of Peru and Potosí have brought about your foolish pride and all the prejudices which degrade you.

Spaniards, when will the impulse come? When will you shake off that fatal lethargy? To-day, a miserable and pitiful nation, useless to yourselves and to the rest of the world, what is it you need? A mighty revolution, a complete overturning, a terrible shock, a regenerating conquest; for your atony is not the kind that can be remedied merely by civilising measures; it calls for fire, to cauterise the gangrene that is eating your vitals.

I called upon the noble and modest Donna Pelliccia. The first performance was to be given in two days. This was not a matter of any difficulty, as the same operas were to be presented as had already been played at Aranjuez, the Escorial and La Granja, for the Count of Aranda would never have dared to sanction the performance of an Italian comic opera in Madrid. The novelty would have been too great and the Inquisition would have interfered. The balls at Los Escaños de Peral had been a considerable shock to it and two years later they were suppressed. Spain will never make any real advance until the Inquisition is abolished.

As soon as Donna Pelliccia had arrived, she sent to the banker, Don Diego Valencia, the letter of introduction she had received from the Duke of Arcos, three months before. She had not seen the duke since their meeting at Aranjuez. We were dining together, she, her husband, her sister, a celebrated first violin (who married her some time later), and I, when, during the dessert, Don Diego was announced.

"Madame," he said, "I have come to offer you my services and to tell you of the orders His Grace has laid on me, of which you may possibly be ignorant."

"I hope, sir," she replied, "that I am not putting you to any inconvenience, but I am extremely grateful to the duke and to yourself and I shall have the honour of calling on you, to give you my thanks."

"Not at all; I have only to say that I have orders to furnish you with any sums you may require, to the amount of twenty-five thousand doubloons."

"Twenty-five thousand doubloons?"

"Exactly, madame, two hundred and fifty thousand francs in French money and no more. Kindly read His Grace's letter; you do not seem to be aware of its contents."

The letter was a brief one:

"Don Diego,—You will furnish Donna Pelliccia with whatever sums she may require, not exceeding twenty-five thousand doubloons, on my account.—The Duke of Arcos."

We remained in a state of perfect stupefaction. Donna Pelliccia returned the epistle to the banker, who bowed and took his leave.

This sounds like almost incredible generosity, but in Spain such things are not uncommon. I have already mentioned the munificent gift of Medina-Celi to Madame Pichona.

Those who are unacquainted with the peculiar Spanish character and the vast riches of some of the nobility, may pronounce such acts of generosity to be ridiculous and positively injurious, but they make a mistake. The spendthrift gives and squanders by a kind of instinct and so he will continue to do as long as his means remain. But these splendid gifts I have described do not come under the category of senseless prodigality. The Spaniard is chiefly ambitious of praise; for praise he will do anything; but this very desire for admiration serves to restrain him from actions by which he would incur blame. He wants to be thought superior to his fellows, as the Spanish nation believes itself superior to all other nations; he wants to be thought worthy of a throne and to be considered as the possessor of all the virtues.

I may also note that, while some of the Spanish nobility are as rich as certain English lords, the former have not so many ways of spending their money as the latter and thus are enabled to be heroically generous on occasion.

As soon as Don Diego had gone, we began to discuss the duke's noble behaviour.

Donna Pelliccia maintained that the duke had wished to show his confidence in her by doing her the honour of supposing her incapable of abusing his generosity. "At all events," she concluded, "I would rather die of hunger than take a single doubloon of Don Diego."

"The duke would be offended," said the violinist. "I think you ought to take something."

"You must take it all," said the husband.

I was of the lady's opinion and told her I was sure the duke would reward her delicacy by making her fortune. She followed my advice and her own impulse, though the banker remonstrated with her. Such is the perversity of the human mind that no one believed in Donna Pelliccia's delicacy. When the King heard what had happened, he ordered the worthy actress to leave Madrid in order to prevent the duke ruining himself.

Such is often the reward of virtue here below, but the malicious persons who had tried to injure Donna Pelliccia by calumniating her to the King were the means of making her fortune.

The duke, who had spoken only once or twice to the actress in public and had never spent a penny on her, took the King's command as an insult and one not to be borne. He was too proud to solicit the King to revoke the order he had given and in the end behaved in a way befitting so noble-minded a man. For the first time he visited Donna Pelliccia in her own house and, begging her to forgive him for having been the innocent cause of her disgrace, asked her to accept a *rouleau* and a letter which he laid on the table.

The *rouleau* contained a hundred gold ounces, with the words "for travelling expenses," and the letter was addressed to a Roman bank and proved to be an order for twenty-four thousand Roman crowns.

For twenty-nine years, this worthy woman kept an establishment

in Rome and did so in a manner which proved her worthy of her good fortune.

The day after Donna Pelliccia's departure, the King saw the Duke of Arcos and told him not to be sad, but to forget the woman, who had been sent away for his own good.

"By sending her away, Your Majesty obliged me to turn fiction into fact, for I knew her only by speaking to her in various public places and I had never made her the smallest present."

"Then you never gave her twenty-five thousand doubloons?"

"Sire, I gave her double that sum, but only on the day before yesterday. Your Majesty has absolute power but, if she had not received her dismissal, I should never have gone to her house, nor should I have given her the smallest present."

The King was stupefied and silent; he was probably meditating the amount of credit a monarch should give to the gossip that his courtiers bring him.

I heard about this from M. Monnino, who was afterwards known under the title of Castille de Florida Blanca and is now living in exile in Murcia, his native country.

After Marescalchi had gone and I was making my preparations for my journey to Barcelona, I saw one day at the bullfight a woman whose appearance had a strange kind of fascination about it. There was a Knight of Alcántara at my side and I asked him who the lady was.

"She is the famous Nina."

"How famous?"

"If you do not know her story, it is too long to be told here."

I could not help gazing at her and two minutes later an ill-looking fellow, quitting her side, came up to my companion and whispered something in his ear. The knight turned towards me and informed me in the most polite manner that the lady whose name I had asked desired to know mine. I was silly enough to be flattered by her curiosity and told the messenger that, if the lady would allow me, I would come to her box and tell her my name in person after the performance.

"From your accent, I should suppose you were an Italian."

"I am a Venetian."

"So is she."

When he had gone away, my neighbour seemed inclined to be more communicative and informed me that Nina was a dancer whom Count de Ricla, the Viceroy of Barcelona, was keeping for some weeks in Valencia, till he could get her back to Barcelona, whence the bishop of the diocese had expelled her on account of the scandals to which she gave rise. "The count," he added, "is madly in love with her and allows her fifty doubloons a day."

"I should hope she does not spend them."

"She can't do that, but she does not let a day pass without committing some expensive act of folly."

I felt curious to know a woman of such a peculiar character and longed for the end of the bullfight, little thinking in what trouble this new acquaintance would involve me.

She received me with great politeness and, as she got into her carriage drawn by six mules, she said she would be delighted if I would breakfast with her at nine o'clock on the following day. I promised to come and I kept my word.

Her house was just outside the town walls and was a very large building. It was richly and tastefully furnished and was surrounded by an enormous garden. The first thing that struck me was the number of the lackeys and the richness of their liveries and the maids in elegant attire, who seemed to be going and coming in all directions.

As I advanced, I heard an imperious voice scolding someone. The scold was Nina, who was abusing an astonished-looking man, who was standing by a large table covered with stuffs and laces.

"Excuse me," she said, "but this fool of a Spaniard wants to persuade me that this lace is really handsome."

She asked me what I thought of the lace and, though I privately thought it lace of the finest quality, I did not care to contradict her and so replied that I was no judge.

"Madame," said the tradesman, "if you do not like the lace, leave it; will you keep the stuffs?"

"Yes," she replied, "and, as for the lace, I will show you that it is not the money that deters me."

So saying, the mad girl took up a pair of scissors and cut the lace into fragments.

"What a pity!" said the man who had spoken to me at the bullfight. "People will say that you have gone off your head."

"Be silent, you pimping rogue!" said she, enforcing her words with a sturdy box on the ear.

The fellow went off, calling her "strumpet," which only made her scream with laughter; then, turning to the Spaniard, she told him to make out his account directly.

The man did not need telling twice and avenged himself for the abuse he had received by the inordinate length of his bill.

She took up the account and placed her initials at the bottom without deigning to look at the items and said, "Go to Don Diego Valencia; he will pay you immediately."

As soon as we were alone, the chocolate was served and she sent a message to the fellow whose ears she had boxed to come to breakfast directly.

"You needn't be surprised at my way of treating him," she said. "He's a rascal whom Ricla has placed in my house to spy out my actions, and I treat him as you have seen, so that he may have plenty of news to write to his master."

I thought I must be dreaming; such a woman seemed to me beyond the limits of the possible.

The poor wretch, who came from Bologna and was a musician by

profession, came and sat down with us without a word. His name was Molinari. As soon as he had finished his breakfast, he left the room and Nina spent an hour with me, talking about Spain, Italy and Portugal, where she had married a dancer named Bergonzi.

"My father," she said, "was the famous charlatan Pelandi; you may have known him in Venice."

After this piece of confidence (and she did not seem at all ashamed of her parentage) she asked me to sup with her, supper being her favourite meal. I promised to come and I left her, to reflect on the extraordinary character of the woman and on the good fortune which she so abused.

Nina was wonderfully beautiful; but, as it has always been my opinion that mere beauty does not go for much, I could not understand how a viceroy could have fallen in love with her to such an extent. As for Molinari, after what I had seen, I could only set him down as an infamous wretch.

I went to supper with her merely for amusement's sake for, with all her beauty, she had not touched my heart in the slightest degree. It was at the beginning of October, but in Valencia the thermometer marked twenty degrees Réaumur in the shade.

Nina was walking in the garden with her companion, both of them being very lightly clad; indeed, Nina had only her chemise and a light petticoat. As soon as she saw me, she came up and begged me to follow their example in the way of attire, but I begged to be excused. The presence of that hateful fellow revolted me in the highest degree. In the interval before supper, Nina entertained me with a number of lascivious anecdotes of her experiences, from the time she began her present mode of living up to the age of twenty-two, which was her age then. If it had not been for the presence of the disgusting Argus, no doubt all these stories would have produced their natural effect on me, but, as it was, they had none whatever.

We had a delicate supper and ate with appetite and, after it was over, I would have gladly left, but Nina would not let me go. The wine had taken effect and she wished to have a little amusement.

After all the servants had been dismissed, this Messalina ordered Molinari to strip naked and then began to treat him in a manner which I cannot describe without disgust.

I could see that she wished me to play my part in the revels, but my disgust had utterly deprived me of all my amorous faculties.

I fled into the next room, not being able to bear it any longer but she followed me.

In this woman I saw an instance of the depths of degradation to which human nature may be brought.

She asked me to sup with her on the following day, telling me that we would be alone, as Molinari would be ill.

"He will have got over the effects of the wine."

"I tell you he will be ill. Come to-morrow and come every evening."

"I am leaving the day after to-morrow."

"You will not go for a week and then we will go together."

"That's impossible."

"If you go you will insult me beyond bearing."

I went home with my mind made up to depart without having anything more to do with her and, though I was far from inexperienced in wickedness of all kinds, I could not help feeling astonished at the unblushing frankness of this Megæra, who had only told me what I already knew, but in words I had never heard a woman use before.

The next day I went to her at seven o'clock in the evening. She received me with an air of feigned melancholy, saying, "Alas! we shall have to sup alone, Molinari has the colic."

"You said he would be ill, have you poisoned him?"

"I am quite capable of doing so, but I hope I never shall."

"But you have given him something?"

"Only what he himself likes; but we will talk of that anon. Let us play, after which we will sup and laugh until the morrow and to-morrow evening we will begin again."

"I am leaving town at seven o'clock to-morrow."

"No, you are not; and your coachman will have no cause for complaint, for he has been paid; here is the receipt."

These remarks, delivered with an air of amorous despotism, flattered my vanity. I made up my mind to submit gaily, called her "wanton" and said I was not worth the pains she was taking over me.

"What astonishes me," said I, "is that with this fine house you do not care to entertain company."

"Everybody is afraid to come; they fear Ricla's jealousy, for it is well known that that animal who is now suffering from colic tells him everything I do. He swears that it is not so, but I know him to be a liar. Indeed, I am very glad he does write to Ricla, and I only wish he had something of real importance to write about."

"He will tell him that I have supped alone with you."

"Let him do it; are you afraid?"

"No; but I think you ought to tell me if I have anything really to fear."

"Nothing at all; it will fall on me."

"But I should not like to involve you in a dispute which might be prejudicial to your interests."

"Not at all; the more I provoke him, the better he loves me and I make him pay dearly when he asks me to make it up."

"Then you don't love him?"

"Yes, to ruin him; but he is so rich that there doesn't seem much hope of my ever doing that."

Before me I saw a woman as beautiful as Venus and as degraded as Lucifer, a woman most surely born to be the ruin of anyone who had the misfortune to fall in love with her. I had known women of similar character, but never one so dangerous as she. I determined to make some money out of her if I could.

She called for cards and asked me to play with her at a game called

primiera. It is a game of chance but of so complicated a nature that the best player always wins. In a quarter of an hour I found that I was the better player, but she had such luck that at the end of the game I had lost twenty pistoles, which I paid on the spot. She took the money, promising to give me revenge.

We had supper and then we committed all the wantonness she wished and that I was capable of performing, for with me the age of miracles was past.

The next day I called to see her earlier in the evening. We played again and she lost and went on losing, evening after evening, till I had won a matter of two or three hundred doubloons, no unwelcome addition to my somewhat depleted purse.

The spy recovered from his colic and supped with us every evening, but his presence no longer interfered with my pleasure, since Nina had ceased to prostitute herself to him in my presence.

The count wrote her a letter which she gave me to read. The poor, lovesick viceroy informed her that she might safely return to Barcelona, as the bishop had received an order from the court to regard her as an actress whose stay in his diocese would be only temporary; she would thus be allowed to live there in peace as long as she abstained from giving cause for scandal. She told me that, whilst she was in Barcelona, I could see her only after ten o'clock at night, when the count had left her. She assured me I would run no risk whatever.

Possibly I would not have stayed in Barcelona at all if Nina had not told me she would always be ready to lend me as much money as I wanted.

She asked me to leave Valencia a day before her and await her at Tarragona. I did so and spent a very pleasant day in that town, which abounds in remains of antiquity.

I ordered a choice supper, according to her instructions, and took care that she should have a separate bedroom, so as to avoid any scandal.

She started in the morning, begging me to wait till the evening and to travel by night, so as to reach Barcelona by daytime. She told me to put up at the Santa Maria and not to call till I had heard from her.

I followed all the directions given me by this curious woman and found myself comfortably lodged in Barcelona. My landlord was a Swiss, who told me in confidence that he had received instructions to treat me well and that I had only to ask for what I wanted.

We shall soon see what was the result of all this.

CHAPTER 129

ALTHOUGH my Swiss landlord seemed an honest and trustworthy kind of man, I could not help thinking that Nina had acted very imprudently in commending me to him. She was the viceroy's mistress and,

though the viceroy might be a very agreeable man, he was a Spaniard and not likely to be easy-going in his love affairs. Nina herself had told me he was ardent, jealous and suspicious. But the mischief was done and there was no help for it.

When I got up, my landlord brought me a *valet de place*, for whose character he said he could answer, and then sent up an excellent dinner. I had slept till three o'clock in the afternoon.

After dinner I summoned my host and asked him whether Nina had told him to get me a servant. He answered me in the affirmative and added that a carriage was waiting my commands at the door; it had been taken by the week.

"I am astonished to hear it, for no one but myself can say what I can afford or not."

"Sir, everything is paid for."

"Paid for! I will not have it!"

"You can settle that with her, but I shall certainly take no payment."

I saw dangers ahead but, as I have never cared to cherish forebodings, I dismissed the idea.

I had a letter of introduction from the Marquis de las Moras to Don Miguel de Cevallos, and another from Colonel Royas to Don Diego de la Secada. I delivered my letters and the next day Don Diego came to see me and took me to see Count de Peralada. The day after Don Miguel introduced me to Count de Ricla, Viceroy of Catalonia, Nina's lover.

Count de Peralada was a young man with a pleasant face but with an ill-proportioned body. He was a great debauchee and lover of bad company, an enemy of religion, morality and law. He was directly descended from the Count de Peralada who served Philip II so well that this king declared him "count by the grace of God." The original patent of nobility was the first thing I saw in his ante-chamber, where it was framed and glazed so that all visitors might see it in the quarter of an hour they were kept waiting.

The count received me with an easy and cordial manner, which seemed to say that he renounced all the dignities of his rank. He thanked Don Diego for introducing me and talked a good deal about Colonel Royas. He asked me if I had seen the English girl he was keeping in Saragossa and, on my replying in the affirmative, he told me in a whisper that he had slept with her.

He took me to his stables, where he had some splendid horses, and then asked me to dine with him the next day.

The viceroy received me in a very different manner; he stood up, so that he might not have to offer me a chair, and, though I spoke Italian, with which language I knew him to be well acquainted, he answered me in Spanish, styling me *usía* (a contraction of *vuestra señoría*—"your lordship"—a banal title given to everyone in Spain) while I gave him his proper title of *Excellence*.

He talked a good deal about Madrid and complained that M. de

Mocenigo had gone to Paris by Bayonne instead of Barcelona, as he had promised.

I tried to excuse my ambassador by saying that, by taking the other route, he had saved fifty leagues of his journey, but the viceroy replied that *tener la palabra* (keeping one's word) comes before all else.

He asked me if I thought of staying long in Barcelona and seemed surprised when I told him that, with his leave, I hoped to make a long stay.

"I hope you will enjoy yourself," he said, "but I must warn you that, if you indulge in the pleasures which my nephew Peralada will doubtless offer you, you will not enjoy a good reputation in Barcelona."

As Count de Ricla made this observation in public, I thought myself justified in communicating it to Peralada himself. He was delighted and told me with evident vanity that he had gone to Madrid three times and had been ordered to return to Catalonia on each occasion.

I thought my best plan would be to follow the viceroy's indirect advice, so I refused to join in any of the little parties of pleasure which Peralada proposed.

On the fifth day after my arrival an officer came to ask me to dinner at the viceroy's. I accepted the invitation with much pleasure, for I had been afraid of the viceroy's having heard of my relations with Nina and thought it possible he might have taken a dislike to me. He was very pleasant to me at dinner, often addressing his observations to me, but always in a tone of great gravity.

I had been in Barcelona for a week and was beginning to wonder why I had not heard from Nina; but one evening she wrote me a note, begging me to come on foot and alone to her house at ten o'clock the same night.

If I had been wise, I would not have gone, for I was not in love with the woman and should have remembered the respect due to the viceroy; but I was devoid of all wisdom and prudence. In my life, full as it was, I had not yet experienced enough misfortune to acquire those two most necessary virtues.

At the hour she had named, I called on her, wearing my greatcoat and with a sword for my only weapon. I found Nina with her sister, a woman of thirty-six or thereabouts, who was married to an Italian dancer, nicknamed *Schizza* because he had a flatter nose than any Tartar.

Nina had just been supping with her lover, who had left her at ten o'clock, according to his invariable custom. She said she was delighted to hear I had been to dinner with him, as she had herself spoken to him in my praise, saying how admirably I had kept her company at Valencia.

"I am glad to hear it, but I do not think you are wise in inviting me to your house at such late hours."

"I do so only to avoid scandal amongst my neighbours."

"In my opinion, my coming so late is only likely to increase the probability of scandal and make your viceroy jealous."

"He will never hear of your coming."

"I think you are mistaken."

I went away at midnight after a conversation of the most decent character. Her sister did not leave us for a moment and Nina gave her no cause to suspect the intimacy of our relations.

I went to see her every evening without encroaching on the count's preserves. I thought myself secure, but the following warning should have made me desist, if I had not been carried away by the forces of destiny and obstinacy in combination.

An officer in the Walloon Guards accosted me one day as I was walking by myself just outside the town. He begged me in the most polite manner to excuse him if he spoke on a matter which was indifferent to him but of great consequence to me.

"Speak, sir," I replied, "I will take whatever you say in good part."

"Very well. You are a stranger, sir, and may not be acquainted with our Spanish manners; consequently you are unaware of the great risk you run in going to see Nina every evening after the count has left her."

"What risk do I run? I have no doubt the count knows all about it and does not object."

"I have no doubt as to his knowing it and he may possibly pretend to know nothing before her, as he fears, as well as loves, her; but, if she tells you he does not object, she deceives either herself or you. He cannot love her without being jealous, and a jealous Spaniard . . . ! Follow my advice, sir, and forgive my freedom."

"I am sincerely obliged to you for your kind interest in me, but I cannot follow your advice, as, by so doing, I should be wanting in politeness to Nina, who likes to see me and gives me a warm welcome. I shall continue to visit her till she orders me not to do so or till the count signifies to me his displeasure at my visits to his mistress."

"The count will never do such a thing; he is too careful of his dignity."

The worthy officer then narrated to me all the acts of injustice which Ricla had committed since he had fallen in love with this woman. He had dismissed gentlemen from his service on the mere suspicion that they were in love with her; some had been exiled and others imprisoned on one frivolous pretext or another. Before he had known Nina, he had been a pattern of wisdom, justice and virtue and now he had become unjust, cruel, blindly passionate and in every way a scandal to the high position he occupied.

All this should have influenced me, but it had not the slightest effect. I told him for politeness' sake that I would endeavour to part from her by degrees, but I had no intention of doing so. When I asked him how he knew that I visited Nina, he laughed and said it was a common topic of conversation all over the town.

The same evening I called on her without mentioning my conver-

sation with the officer. There would have been some excuse for me if I had been in love with her, but, as it was . . . I acted like a madman.

On the 14th of November, I went to see her at the usual time. I found her with a man who was showing her miniatures. I looked at him and found that he was the scoundrel Passano, or Pogomas.

My blood boiled; I took Nina's hand and led her into a neighbouring room and told her to dismiss the rogue at once or I would go, to return no more.

"He's a painter."

"I am well acquainted with his history and will tell you all about it presently; but send him away or I shall go."

She called her sister and told her to order the Genoese to leave the house and never to enter it again.

The thing was done in a moment, but the sister told us that he said, as he went out, "*Se ne arrepentirà.*" (He shall be sorry for it.)

I occupied an hour in relating some of the injuries I had received from this scoundrelly fellow.

The next day (November 15th), I went to Nina at the usual time and, after spending two hours in a pleasant converse with her and her sister, I went out as the clocks were striking midnight.

The door of the house was under an arcade, which extended to the end of the street. It was a dark night and I had scarcely gone twenty-five paces when two men suddenly rushed at me.

I stepped back, drawing my sword and exclaiming, "Assassins!" and then, with a rapid movement, I thrust my blade into the body of the nearest assailant. I then left the arcade and began to run down the street. The second assassin fired a pistol at me, but fortunately it missed me. I fell and dropped my hat in my rapid flight and got up and continued my course, without troubling to pick up the hat. I did not know whether I was wounded or not, but at last I got to my inn and laid the bloody sword on the counter under the landlord's nose. I was quite out of breath.

I told the landlord what had happened and, on taking off my greatcoat, I found it to be pierced in two places just below the armpit.

"I am going to bed," I said to the landlord, "and I leave my greatcoat and sword in your charge. To-morrow morning I shall ask you to come with me before the magistrate to denounce this act of assassination for, if the man was killed, it must be shown that I slew him only to save my own life."

"I think your best plan would be to flee Barcelona immediately."

"Then you think I have not told you the strict truth?"

"I am sure you have, but I know whence the blow comes and God knows what will befall you!"

"Nothing at all; but, if I fly, I shall be accounted guilty. Take care of the sword; they tried to assassinate me, but I think the assassins got the worst of it."

I went to bed somewhat perturbed, but I had the consoling thought

that, if I had killed a man, I had done so in self-defence; my conscience was quite clear.

At seven o'clock the next morning I heard a knocking at my door. I opened it and saw my landlord, accompanied by an officer who told me to give him all my papers, to dress and follow him, adding that he would be compelled to use force in case of resistance.

"I have no intention of resisting," I replied. "By whose authority do you ask for my papers?"

"By the authority of the governor. They will be returned to you if nothing suspicious is found amongst them."

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To the citadel."

I opened my trunk and took out my linen and my clothes, which I gave to my landlord, and I saw the officer's astonishment at seeing my trunk half-filled with notebooks.

"These are all the papers I have," I said. I locked the box and gave the officer the key.

"I advise you, sir," he said, "to put all necessary articles into a portmanteau." He then ordered the landlord to send me a bed and finally asked me if I had any papers in my pockets.

"Only my passports."

"That's exactly what we want," he rejoined with a grim smile.

"My passports are sacred; I will never give them to anyone but the governor-general. Reverence your King; here is his passport, here is that of the Count of Aranda and here the passport of the Venetian ambassador. You will have to bind me hand and foot before you get them."

"Be more moderate, sir. In giving them to me, it is just as if you gave them to the viceroy. If you resist, I will not bind you hand and foot, but I shall take you before the viceroy and then you will be forced to give them up in public. Give them to me with a good grace; you will get a receipt."

The worthy landlord told me I would be wiser to give in, so I let myself be persuaded. The officer gave me a full quittance, which I put in my pocketbook (this he let me keep, out of kindness) and then I followed him. He had six constables with him, but they kept a good distance away. Comparing this with the circumstances of my arrest in Madrid, I thought myself well treated.

Before we left the inn, the officer told me I might order what meals I pleased, and I asked the landlord to let me have my dinner and supper as usual.

On the way I told him of my adventure of the night before; he listened attentively but made no comments.

When we reached the citadel, I was delivered to the officer of the guard, who gave me a room on the first floor. It was bare of furniture, but the windows looked out on a square and had no iron bars.

I had been there scarcely ten minutes when my handbag and an excellent bed were brought in.

As soon as I was alone, I began to think over the situation. I finished where I ought to have begun.

"What can this imprisonment have to do with my last night's adventure?" I reflected.

I could not make out the connection.

"They are bent on examining my papers; they must think I have been tampering in some political or religious intrigue; but my mind is quite at ease on that score. I am well lodged at present and no doubt shall be set free after my papers have been examined; they can find nothing against me there.

"The affair of my attempted assassination will, no doubt, be considered separately. Even if the rascal is dead, I do not see what they can do to me.

"On the other hand, my landlord's advice to fly from Barcelona looks ominous; what if the assassins received their orders from some person high in authority? It is possible that Ricla may have vowed my ruin, but that does not seem probable to me. Would it have been wise to follow the landlord's advice? Possibly, but I do not think so; my honour would have suffered and I might have been caught and laid up in some horrid dungeon, whereas, for a prison, I am comfortable enough here.

"In three or four days the examination of my papers will have been completed and, as there is nothing in them likely to be offensive to the powers that be, they will be returned to me together with my liberty, which will taste all the sweeter for this short deprivation.

"As for my passports, they all speak in my favour.

"I cannot think that the all-powerful hand of the viceroy could have directed the assassin's sword; it would be a dishonour to him and, if it were so, he would not be treating me so kindly now. If it was his doing, he must have heard directly that the blow had failed and in that case I do not think he would have arrested me this morning.

"Shall I write to Nina? Will writing be allowed here?"

As I was puzzling my brains with these reflections, stretched on my bed (for I had no chair), I heard some disturbance and, on opening my window, I saw, to my great astonishment, Passano being brought into the prison by a corporal and two soldiers. As he was going in, the rascal looked up and saw me and began to laugh.

"Alas!" I said to myself, "here is fresh food for conjecture. The fellow told Nina's sister I would be sorry for what I had done. He must have directed some fearful calumny against me and they are imprisoning him so as to be sure of his evidence."

On reflection I was well pleased at the turn affairs had taken.

An excellent dinner was set before me, but I had no chair or table. This deficiency was remedied by the soldier who was in charge of me, for the consideration of a *duro*.

Prisoners were not allowed to have pen and ink without special permission; but paper and pencils were not included under this regulation, so my guard got them for me, together with candles and candle-

sticks, and I proceeded to kill time by making geometrical calculations. I made the obliging soldier sup with me and he promised to commend me to one of his comrades, who would serve me well. The guard was relieved at eleven.

On the fourth day the officer of the guard came to me with a distressed look and told me he had the disagreeable duty of giving me some very bad news.

"What is that, sir?"

"I have received orders to transfer you to the bottom of the tower."

"To transfer me?"

"Yes."

"Then they must have discovered in me a criminal of the deepest dye! Let us go at once."

I found myself in a kind of round cellar, paved with large flagstones and lighted by five or six narrow slits in the walls. The officer told me I must order what food I required to be brought once a day, as no one was allowed to come into the *calabozo*, or dungeon, by night.

"How about lights?"

"You may have one lamp always burning and that will be enough, as books are not allowed. When your dinner is brought, the officer on duty will open the pies and the poultry to see that they do not contain any documents; for here no letters are allowed to come in or go out."

"Have these orders been given for my especial benefit?"

"No, sir; it is the ordinary rule. You will be able to converse with the sentinel."

"The door will be open, then?"

"Not at all."

"How about the cleanliness of my cell?"

"A soldier will accompany the officer in charge of your dinner and he will attend to your wants for a trifle."

"May I amuse myself by making architectural plans with a pencil?"

"As much as you like."

"Then will you be good enough to order some paper to be bought for me?"

"With pleasure."

The officer seemed to pity me as he left me and bolted and barred the heavy door, behind which I saw a man standing sentry with his bayonet fixed. The door was fitted with a small iron grating.

When I got my paper and my dinner at noonday, the officer cut open a fowl and plunged a fork into the other dishes, so as to make sure there were no papers at the bottom.

My dinner would have sufficed for six people. I told the officer I should be much honoured by his dining with me, but he replied that it was strictly forbidden. He gave me the same answer when I asked if I might have the newspapers.

It was a festival time for the sentinels, as I shared my meals and my good wine with them, and consequently these poor fellows were firmly attached to me.

I was curious to know who was paying for my good cheer, but there was no chance of my finding out, for the waiter from the inn was never allowed to approach my cell.

In this dungeon, where I was imprisoned for forty-two days, I wrote in pencil and without other reference than my memory, my refutation of Amelot de la Houssaye's *History of the Venetian Government*.

I was most heartily amused during my imprisonment and in the following manner:

While I was in Warsaw, an Italian named Tadini came there. He had an introduction to Tomatis, who commended him to me. He called himself an oculist. Tomatis used to give him a dinner now and again but I, not being well off in those days, could give him only good words and a cup of coffee when he chanced to come about my breakfast-time.

Tadini talked to everybody about the operations he had performed and he condemned an oculist who had been in Warsaw for twenty years, saying that he did not understand how to remove a cataract, while the other oculist said Tadini was a charlatan who did not know how the eye was made.

Tadini begged me to speak in his favour to a lady who had had a cataract removed by the Warsaw oculist, only to return again a short time after the operation. The lady was blind in the one eye but could see with the other and I told Tadini I did not care to meddle with such a delicate matter.

"I have spoken to the lady," said Tadini, "and I have mentioned your name as a person who will answer for me."

"You have done wrong; in such a matter I would not stand surety for the most learned of men and I know nothing about your learning."

"But you know I am an oculist."

"I know you were introduced to me as such, but that's all. As a professional man, you should not need anyone's commendation; you should be able to say, *Operibus credite*. That should be your motto."

Tadini was vexed with my incredulity and showed me a number of testimonials, which I might possibly have read if the first which met my eye had not been from a lady who protested to all and singular that M. Tadini had cured her of *amaurosis*. At this, I laughed in his face and told him to leave me alone.

A few days after I found myself dining with him at the house of the lady with the cataract. She had almost made up her mind to submit to the operation but, as the rascal had mentioned my name, she wanted me to be present at a dispute between Tadini and the other oculist, who came in when the dessert was served.

I disposed myself to listen to the arguments of the two rival professors with considerable pleasure. The Warsaw oculist was a German but spoke French very well; however, he attacked Tadini in Latin. The Italian checked him by saying that their discourse must be conducted in a language intelligible to the lady, and I agreed with him. It was plain that Tadini did not know a word of Latin.

The German oculist began by admitting that after the operation for cataract there was no chance of the disease returning, but there was a considerable risk of the crystalline humour evaporating and the patient being left in a state of total blindness.

Tadini, instead of denying this statement (which was inaccurate), had the folly to take a little box out of his pocket. It contained a number of minute, round crystals.

"What's that?" said the old professor.

"A substance which I can place in the cornea to supply the loss of the crystalline matter."

The German went off into a roar of laughter, so long and loud that the lady could not help laughing. I should have liked to join them, but I was ashamed at being thought the patron of this ignorant fellow, so I preserved a gloomy silence.

Tadini no doubt interpreted my silence as a mark of disapproval of the German's laughter and thought to better matters by asking me to give my opinion.

"As you want to hear it," said I, "here it is. There's a great difference between a tooth and the crystalline humour and, though you may have succeeded in putting an artificial tooth into a gum, this treatment will not do with the eye."

"Sir, I am not a dentist."

"No, nor an oculist either."

At this, the ignorant rascal got up and left the room and it was decidedly the best thing he could do.

We laughed over this new treatment and the lady promised to have nothing more to do with him. The professor was not content to despise his opponent in silence. He had him cited before the Faculty of Medicine to be examined on his knowledge of the eye and procured the insertion of a satiric article in the gazette on the new operation for replacing crystalline humour, alluding to the wonderful artist then in Warsaw who could perform this operation as easily as a dentist could put in a false tooth.

This made Tadini furious and he set upon the old professor in the street and forced him to take refuge in a house. After this, he no doubt left the town on foot, for he was seen no more.

Now the reader is in a position to understand my surprise and amusement when one day, as I peered through the grating in my dungeon, I saw the oculist Tadini, standing sentry over me with gun in hand. But he at all events evinced no amusement whatever, while I roared and roared again with laughter for the two hours his duty lasted.

I gave him a good meal and a sufficiency of my excellent wine and, at the end, a crown, promising he should have the same treatment every time he returned to the post. But I saw him only four times, as the guard at my cell was a position eagerly coveted and intrigued for by the other soldiers.

Tadini amused me by the story of his misadventures since he had

left Warsaw. He had travelled far and wide without making a fortune and at last arrived in Barcelona, where he failed to meet with any courtesy or consideration. He had no introduction, no diploma; he had refused to submit to an examination in the Latin tongue because (as he said) there was no connection between the learned languages and the diseases of the eye; and the result was that, instead of the common fate of being ordered to leave the country, he was made into a soldier. He told me in confidence that he intended to desert, but he said he would take care to avoid the galleys.

"What have you done with your crystals?"

"I gave them up on leaving Warsaw, though I am sure they would succeed."

I never heard of him again.

On December 28th, six weeks after my arrest, the officer of the guard came to my cell and told me to dress and follow him.

"Where are we going?"

"I am about to deliver you to an officer of the viceroy who is waiting."

I dressed hastily and, after placing all my belongings in a portmanteau, I followed him. We went to the guard-room and there I was placed under the charge of the officer who had arrested me, who thereupon took me to the palace. There a government official showed me my trunk, telling me I would find all my papers intact; and he then returned me my three passports, with the remark that they were genuine documents.

"I knew that all along."

"I suppose so, but we had reasons for doubting their authenticity."

"They must have been strange reasons, for, as you now confess, those reasons were devoid of reason."

"You must be aware that I cannot reply to such an objection."

"I don't ask you to."

"Your character is perfectly clear; all the same, I must request you to leave Barcelona in three days and Catalonia in a week."

"Of course I will obey, but it strikes me that the Catalonian method of repairing justice is somewhat peculiar."

"If you think you have ground for complaint, you are at liberty to go to Madrid and complain to the Court."

"I have certainly grounds enough for complaint, sir, but I shall go to France and not to Madrid; I have had enough of Spanish justice. Will you please give me the order to leave in writing?"

"That's unnecessary; you may take it for granted. My name is Manuel Badillo, secretary in the governor's office. That gentleman will escort you back to the room where you were arrested. You will find everything just as you left it. You are a free man. To-morrow I will send you your passport, signed by the viceroy and myself. Good day, sir."

Accompanied by the officer and a servant bearing my portmanteau, I proceeded to my old inn.

On my way I saw a theatrical poster and decided to go to the opera. The good landlord was delighted to see me again and hastened to light me a fire, for a bitterly cold north wind was blowing. He assured me that no one but himself had been in my room, and in the officer's presence he gave me back my sword, my greatcoat and, to my astonishment, the hat I had dropped in my flight from the assassins.

The officer asked if I had any complaints to make and I replied that I had none.

"I should like to hear you say that I have done nothing but my duty and that, personally, I have not done you any injury."

I shook his hand and assured him of my esteem.

"Farewell, sir," said he. "I hope you will have a pleasant journey."

I told my landlord I would dine at noon and that I trusted to him to celebrate my liberation in a fitting manner and then I went to the post-office to see if there were any letters for me. I found five or six letters, with the seals intact, much to my astonishment. What is one to make of a government which deprives a man of his liberty on some trifling pretext and, though seizing all his papers, respects the privacy of his letters? But Spain, as I have remarked, is peculiar in every way.

These letters were from Paris, Venice, Warsaw and Madrid and I have never had any reason to believe that any other letters had come for me during my imprisonment.

I went back to my inn and asked the landlord to bring the bill.

"You do not owe me anything, sir. Here is your bill for the period preceding your imprisonment and, as you see, it has been settled. I also received orders from the same source to provide for you during your imprisonment and as long as you stayed in Barcelona."

"Did you know how long I would remain in prison?"

"No, I was paid by the week."

"Who paid you?"

"You know very well."

"Have you received any note for me?"

"Nothing at all."

"What has become of the *valet de place*?"

"I paid him and sent him away immediately after your arrest."

"I should like to have him with me as far as Perpignan."

"You are right and I think the best thing you can do is to leave Spain altogether, for you will find no justice in it."

"What do they say about the attempt to assassinate me?"

"Why, they say you yourself fired the shot that people heard and that you made your own sword bloody, for no one was found there, either dead or wounded."

"That's an amusing theory. Where did my hat come from?"

"It was brought to me three days after."

"What a confusion! But was it known that I was imprisoned in the tower?"

"Everybody knew it and two good reasons were given, the one in public and the other in private."

"What are those reasons?"

"The public reason was that you had forged your passports; the private one, which was only whispered in the ear, was that you spent all your nights with Nina."

"You might have sworn that I never slept out of your inn"

"I told everyone as much, but no matter; you did go to her house and for a certain nobleman that's a crime. I am glad you did not flee, as I advised you for, as it is now, your character is cleared before everybody."

"I should like to go to the opera this evening; get me a box."

"It shall be done. But do not have anything more to do with Nina, I entreat you."

"No, my good friend, I have made up my mind to see her no more."

Just as I was sitting down to dinner, a banker's clerk brought me a letter which pleased me very much. It contained the bills of exchange I had drawn in Genoa in favour of M. Augustin Grimaldi. He now sent them back, with these words:

"Passano has been vainly endeavouring to persuade me to send these bills to Barcelona, so that they may be protested and you be arrested. I am sending them but to convince you that I am not one of those who delight in adding to the troubles of the victims of bad fortune.—Genoa, November 30th, 1768."

For the fourth time a Genoese had behaved most generously to me. I was almost persuaded that I ought to forgive the infamous Passano for the sake of his four excellent fellow countrymen.

But that virtue was a little beyond me. I concluded that the best thing I could do would be to rid the Genoese name of the opprobrium which this rascal was always bringing on it, but I could never find an opportunity. (Some years later, I heard that the wretch had died in miserable poverty in Genoa.)

I was curious at the time to know what had become of him, as it was important for me to be on my guard. I confided my curiosity to my landlord and he instructed one of the servants to make inquiries. I ascertained only that one Ascanio Pogomas, or Passano, had been released at the end of November and had then been embarked on a felucca bound for Toulon.

The same day I wrote a long and grateful letter to M. Grimaldi. I had, indeed, reason to be grateful for, if he had listened to my enemy, he might have reduced me to a state of dreadful misery.

My landlord had taken the box at the opera in my name and two hours afterwards, to everyone's great astonishment, the posters announcing the plays of the evening were covered by bills informing the public that two of the performers had been taken ill, that the play would not be given and that the theatre would remain closed till the second day of the new year. This order undoubtedly came from the viceroy and everybody knew the reason.

I was sorry to have deprived the people of Barcelona of the only

amusement they had in the evening and resolved to stay indoors, thinking this would be the most dignified course I could adopt.

Petrarch says, "*Amor che fa gentile un cor villano.*" If he had known Nina's lover, he would have changed the line into, *Amor che fa villan un cor gentile.*

In four months I shall be able to throw some more light on this strange business.

I would have left Barcelona the same day, but a slight tinge of superstition made me desire to leave on the last day of the unhappy year I had spent in Spain. I therefore spent my three days of grace writing letters to all my friends.

Don Miguel de Cevallos, Don Diego de la Secada and Count de la Peralada came to see me, but separately. Don Diego de la Secada was the uncle of the Countess A— B—, whom I had met in Milan. These gentlemen told me a tale as strange as any of the circumstances which had happened to me in Barcelona.

On the 26th of December, the Abbé Marquisio, the envoy of the Duke of Modena, asked the viceroy, before a considerable number of people, if he could pay me a visit to give me a letter which he could place in no hands but mine. If not, he said he would be obliged to take the letter to Madrid, for which town he was obliged to set out the next day. The count made no answer, to everyone's astonishment, and the abbé left for Madrid the next day, the eve of my being set at liberty.

I wrote to the abbé, who was unknown to me, but I never succeeded in finding out the truth about this letter.

There could be no doubt that I had been arrested by the despotic viceroy whose jealous love Nina had been tantalising and whom the fair rogue, for sport's sake, had led to believe that I was in the happy possession of her love. The question of my passports must have been a mere pretext, for eight or ten days would have sufficed to send them to Madrid and have them back again if their authenticity had been doubted. Possibly Passano might have told the viceroy that any passports of mine were bound to be false, as I should have had to obtain the signature of my own ambassador; this, he might have said, was out of the question, as I was in disfavour with the Venetian Government. As a matter of fact, he was mistaken if he really said so, but the mistake would have been an excusable one.

When I made up my mind at the end of August to leave Madrid, I asked the Count of Aranda for a passport. He replied that I must first obtain one from my ambassador, who, he added, could not refuse to do me this service.

Fortified with this opinion, I called at the embassy. M. Querini was at San Ildefonso at the time and I told the porter I wanted to speak to the secretary of embassy.

The servant sent in my name and the idiot gave himself airs and pretended that he could not receive me. In my indignation, I wrote to him, saying that I had not called to pay my court to the secretary but

stage themselves and where they were going, but I took care to do nothing of the kind. All I asked was whether the road to Perpignan was a good one, and they told me it was excellent all the way."

"What are they doing now?"

"They are sleeping by my mules, covered with their cloaks."

"What shall we do?"

"We will start at daybreak—after them, of course—and we will dine at the usual stage; but after dinner trust me; we will take a different road and at midnight we shall be in France, safe and sound."

If I could have procured a good armed escort, I would not have taken his advice but, in the situation I was in, I had no choice.

We found the three scoundrels in the place where the driver had told me we should see them. I gave them a searching glance and thought they looked like true Sicarii, ready to kill anyone for a little money.

They started in a quarter of an hour, and half an hour later we set out with a peasant to guide us and struck into a cross road. The mules went at a sharp pace and in seven hours we had done eleven leagues. At ten o'clock we stopped at an inn in a French village and had no more to fear. I gave our guide a doubloon, with which he was well pleased, and I enjoyed once more a peaceful night in a French bed, for nowhere will you find such soft beds or such delicious wines as in the good land of France.

The next day I arrived at the posting-inn at Perpignan in time for dinner. I endeavoured in vain to think who could have paid my assassins, but the reader will see the explanation when we get twenty days farther.

At Perpignan I dismissed my driver and my servant, rewarding them according to my ability. I wrote to my brother in Paris, telling him I had had a fortunate escape from the assassin's dagger. I begged him to direct his answer to Aix, where I intended to spend a fortnight, in the hope of seeing the Marquis d'Argens.

I left Perpignan the day after my arrival and slept at Narbonne and the day after at Béziers. The distance from Narbonne to Béziers is only five leagues and I had not intended to stop, but the good cheer which the kindest of landladies gave me at dinner made me stay to sup with her.

Béziers is a town which looks pleasant even at the worst time of the year. A philosopher who wished to renounce all the vanities of the world and an Epicurean who would enjoy good cheer cheaply could find no better retreat than Béziers.

Everybody in Béziers is intelligent; all the women are pretty; all the cooks are artists; the wines are exquisite—what more could one desire? May its riches never prove its ruin!

When I reached Montpellier, I put up at The White Horse inn with the intention of spending a week there. In the evening I supped at the *table d'hôte*, where I found a numerous company and saw to my amusement that a separate dish was brought to the table for each guest.

Nowhere is there better fare than Montpellier. 'Tis a veritable Land of Cocagne!

The next day I breakfasted at the café (an institution peculiar to France, the only country where the science of living is really understood) and addressed the first gentleman I met, telling him that I was a stranger and would like to know some of the professors. He immediately offered to take me to one of the professors who enjoyed a great reputation.

Herein may be seen another of the good qualities of the French, who rank above other nations on so many points. To a Frenchman a foreigner is a sacred being; he receives the best of hospitality, not merely in form, but in deed, and his welcome is given with that easy grace which so soon puts a stranger at his ease.

My new friend introduced me to the professor, who received me with all the polished courtesy of the French man of letters. He who loves letters should love all other lovers of letters, and in France this is the case even more so than in Italy. In Germany the literary man has an air of mysterious reserve. He thinks he is proclaiming to all the world that he, at all events, is a man of no pretension, whereas his pride peeps through every moment. Naturally the stranger is not encouraged by such a manner as this.

At the time of my visit there was an excellent company of actors in Montpellier, whom I went to see the same evening. My bosom swelled at finding myself in the blessed air of France, after all the annoyances I had gone through in Spain. I seemed to have become young again; but I had changed, for several beautiful and clever actresses appeared on the stage without arousing any desires within me; and I was glad to have it so.

I had a lively desire to find Madame Castelbajac, much more for the sake of congratulating her if she was prosperous or, if not, sharing with her the little I possessed, than in the hope of renewing our old association, but I did not know how to go to work to find her. I had written her under the name of "Madame Blasin," but she had not received my letter as that was a name she had assumed at random and she had not confided to me her real name. Furthermore, I was afraid of compromising her if I made inquiry for her.

I knew that her husband was an apothecary, so I resolved to make the acquaintance of all the apothecaries in the place. I pretended to be in want of some very rare drugs and entered into conversation about the differences between the trade in France and in foreign countries. If I talked with the master, I hoped he would speak to his wife about the stranger who had visited the countries where she had been and that would make her curious to know me. If, on the other hand, I talked with the clerk, I knew he would soon tell me all he knew about his master's family.

On the third day my stratagem succeeded. My old friend wrote me a note, telling me she had seen me talking with her husband in his shop. She begged me to come again at a certain time and to tell her

husband that I had known her as a lace-seller under the name of Mlle Blasin in England, Spa, Leipzig and Vienna. She ended her note with these words, "I have no doubt my husband will finally introduce you to me as his wife."

I followed her advice and the good man asked me if I had ever known a young lace-seller of the name of Mlle. Blasin, of Montpellier.

"Yes, I remember her rather well, a delightful and most respectable young woman, but I did not know she came from Montpellier. She was very pretty and very sensible and I expect she did a good business. I saw her in several European cities and the last time in Vienna, where I was able to be of some slight service to her. Her admirable behaviour won her the esteem of all the ladies with whom she came in contact. In England I met her at the house of a duchess."

"Do you think you would recognise her if you saw her again?"

"By Jove! I should think so! But is she in Montpellier? If so, tell her that the Chevalier de Seingalt is here."

"Sir, you shall speak to her yourself, if you will do me the honour to follow me."

My heart leapt but I restrained myself. The worthy apothecary went through the shop, climbed a stair and, opening a door on the first floor, said to me, "There she is!"

"What, mademoiselle! You here? I am delighted to see you!"

"This is not a young lady, sir; 'tis my dear wife; but I hope that will not hinder you from embracing her."

"I have never had such an honour, but I will avail myself of your permission with pleasure. Then you married in Montpellier. I congratulate both of you and wish you all health and happiness. Tell me, did you have a pleasant journey from Vienna to Lyons?"

Madame Blasin (for so I must continue to designate her) answered my question according to her fancy and found me as good an actor as she was actress. We were glad to see each other again, but the apothecary was delighted at the great respect with which I treated his wife. For a whole hour, we carried on a conversation of a perfectly imaginary character and with all the simplicity of perfect truth.

She asked me if I thought of spending the carnival in Montpellier and seemed quite chagrined when I said that I thought of leaving the next day. Her husband hastened to say that that was quite out of the question.

"Oh, I hope you won't go," she added. "You must do my husband the honour of dining with us."

After the husband had pressed me for some time, I gave in and accepted their invitation to dinner for the day after next.

Instead of stopping two days, I stopped four. I was much pleased with the husband's mother, who was advanced in years but extremely intelligent. She had evidently made a point of forgetting everything unpleasant in the past history of her son's wife.

Madame Blasin told me in private that she was perfectly happy, and I had every reason to believe that she was speaking the truth.

She had made it a rule to be most precise in fulfilling her wifely duties and rarely went out unless accompanied by her husband or her mother-in-law.

I spent these four days in the enjoyment of pure and innocent friendship, without there being the slightest desire on either side to renew our guilty pleasures.

On the third day, after I had dined with her and her husband, she told me, while we were alone for a moment, that, if I needed fifty louis, she knew where to get them for me. I told her to keep them for another time, if I was so fortunate as to see her again and so unfortunate as to be in want.

I left Montpellier, feeling certain that my visit had increased the esteem in which her husband and her mother-in-law held her, and I congratulated myself on my ability to be happy without committing any sins.

The day after I had bade them farewell, I slept at Nîmes, where I spent three days in the company of a naturalist, M. de Séguier, a close friend of the Marquis Maffei, of Verona. In his cabinet of natural history I saw and admired the immensity and infinity of the Creator's handiwork.

Nîmes is a town well worthy of the stranger's observation; it provides food for the mind, and the fair sex, which is really fair there, should give the heart the food it likes best.

I was asked to a ball, where, as a foreigner, I took first place—a privilege peculiar to France, for in England, and still more in Spain, a foreigner means an enemy.

On leaving Nîmes, I resolved to spend the carnival at Aix, where the nobility is of the most distinguished character. I believe I lodged at The Three Dolphins, where I found a Spanish cardinal, on his way to Rome to elect a successor to Pope Rezzonico.

CHAPTER 130

My room was separated from that of His Castilian Eminence only by a light partition, and I could hear him quite plainly reprimanding his chief servant for being too economical.

"My lord, I do my best, but it is really impossible to spend more unless I compell the innkeepers to take double the amount of their bills, and Your Eminence will admit that nothing in the way of rich and expensive dishes has been spared."

"That may be, but you ought to use your wits a little; you might, for example, order meals when we shall not require any. Take care that there are always three tables—one for us, one for my officers and the third for the servants. Why! I see that you give the postillions only a franc over the legal charge; I really blush for you; you must give them a crown extra, at least. When they give you change for a louis, leave it on the table; to put back one's change in one's pocket is an

action worthy only of a beggar. They will be saying in Versailles and Madrid, and maybe in Rome itself, that the Cardinal de la Cerda is a miser. I am no such thing and I do not want to be thought one. You must really cease to dishonour me, or else leave my service."

A year before this speech would have astonished me beyond measure, but now I was not surprised, for I had acquired some knowledge of Spanish manners.

I might admire the Señor de la Cerda's prodigality, but I could not help deploring such ostentation on the part of a Prince of the Church, about to participate in such a solemn function.

What I had heard him say made me curious to see him and I kept on the watch for the moment of his departure. What a man! He was not only ill-made, short and sunburnt, but his face was so ugly and so low that I concluded Æsop himself must have been a little Love beside His Eminence. I understood now why he was so profuse in his generosity and decorations, for otherwise he might well have been taken for a stable boy. If ever the conclave took the eccentric whim of making him Pope, Christ would never have an uglier vicar.

I inquired about the Marquis d'Argens soon after the departure of His Eminence and was told that he was in the country with his brother, the Marquis d'Eguille, President of the Parliament, so I went there.

This marquis, famous for his friendship for Frederick II rather than for his writings, which are no longer read, was an old man when I saw him. He was a worthy man, fond of pleasure, a thorough-paced Epicurean, and had married an actress named Cochois, who had proved worthy of the honour he had laid on her. He was deeply learned and had a thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew literature. His memory was prodigious.

He received me very well and recalled what his friend, the marshal, had written about me. He introduced me to his wife and his brother, a distinguished jurist, a man of letters and a man strictly moral by temperament as much as by religion. Though a highly intellectual man, he was deeply and sincerely religious.

He was very fond of his brother and grieved for his irreligion, but hoped that grace would eventually bring him back into the fold of the Church. His brother encouraged him in his hopes, while laughing at them in private, but, as they were both sensible men, they never discussed religion together.

I was introduced to a numerous company of both sexes, consisting chiefly of relatives. All were amiable and highly polished, like all the Provençal nobility.

Plays were performed on the miniature stage, good cheer prevailed and at intervals we walked in the garden, in spite of the season. In Provence, however, the winter is severe only when the wind blows from the north, which unfortunately often happens. Among the company were a Berlin lady, widow of the marquis's nephew, and her brother. This young gentleman, who was gay and free from care, enjoyed all the pleasures of the house without paying any attention to the religious

services which were held every day. If he thought on the matter at all, he was a heretic; when the Jesuit chaplain was saying mass, he amused himself by playing on the flute; he laughed at everything. He was unlike his sister, who had not only become a Catholic but was a very devout one. She was only twenty-two.

Her brother told me that her husband, who had died of consumption and whose mind was perfectly clear to the last, as is usually the case in phthisis, had told her he could not entertain any hopes of seeing her in the other world unless she became a Catholic. These words were engraved on her heart; she had adored her husband and she resolved to leave Berlin and live with his relatives. No one ventured to oppose this design, her brother accompanying her, and she was welcomed joyfully by all her husband's kinsfolk. This budding saint was decidedly plain.

Her brother, finding me less strict than the others, soon constituted himself my friend. He came over to Aix every day and took me to the houses of all the best people.

We were at least thirty at table every day, the dishes were delicate without undue profusion and the conversation gay and animated without any improprieties. I noticed that, whenever the Marquis d'Argens chanced to let slip an equivocal expression, all the ladies made wry faces and the chaplain hastened to turn the conversation. This chaplain had nothing Jesuitical in his appearance; he dressed in the costume of an ordinary priest and I should never have guessed what he was, although this species can generally be smelt from afar. But the Marquis d'Argens put me on my guard. However, I did not allow his presence to act as a wet blanket.

I told, in the most decent manner possible, the story of the picture of the Virgin suckling her Divine Child and how the Spaniards deserted the chapel after a stupid priest had covered the beautiful breast with a kerchief. I do not know how it was, but all the ladies began to laugh. The disciple of Loyola was so displeased at their mirth that he took upon himself to tell me it was unbecoming to tell such equivocal stories in public. I thanked him with a bow and the Marquis d'Argens, by way of changing the conversation, asked me what was the Italian for a splendid dish of stewed veal which Madame d'Argens was serving.

"*Una crostata*," I replied, "but I really do not know the Italian for the *béatilles* with which it is stuffed."

These *béatilles* were balls of sweetbreads, mushrooms, artichoke, *foie gras*, etc.

The Jesuit declared that, in calling them *béatilles*, I was making a mock of the glories of the hereafter.

I could not help roaring with laughter at this and the Marquis d'Eguille took my part and said that *béatilles* was the proper French for these balls.

After this daring difference of opinion with his director, the worthy man thought it would be best to talk of something else. Unhappily,

however, he fell out of the frying-pan into the fire by asking me my opinion as to the election of the next Pope."

"I believe it will be Ganganelli," I replied, "as he is the only monk in the conclave."

"Why should it be necessary to choose a monk?"

"Because none but a monk would dare to commit the excess which the Spaniards will demand of the new Pope."

"You mean the suppression of the Jesuits."

"Exactly."

"They will never obtain such a demand."

"I hope not, for the Jesuits were my masters and I love them accordingly. But, all the same, Ganganelli will be elected, for an amusing and yet a weighty reason."

"Tell us the reason."

"He is the only cardinal who does not wear a wig; and you must consider that, since the foundation of the Holy See, the Pope has never been bewigged."

This reason created a great deal of amusement; but the conversation was brought back to the suppression of the Jesuits and, when I told the company what I had heard from the Abbé Pinzi, I saw the Jesuit turn pale.

"The Pope could never suppress the order," he said.

"It seems that you have never been at a Jesuit seminary," I replied, "for the dogma of the order is that the Pope can do everything *et aliquid pluris*."

This answer made everybody suppose me to be unaware that I was speaking to a Jesuit and, as he gave me no answer, the topic was abandoned.

After dinner I was asked to stay and see *Polyeucte* played, but I excused myself and returned to Aix with the young Berliner, who told me the story of his sister and enlightened me as to the character of the society to which the Marquis d'Eguille was chiefly addicted. I felt that I could never adapt myself to their prejudices and, if it had not been for my young friend, who introduced me to some charming people, I should have gone on to Marseilles.

What with assemblies, balls, suppers and the society of the handsome Provençal ladies, I managed to spend the whole of the carnival and a part of Lent at Aix.

I had made a present of a copy of the *Iliad* to the learned Marquis d'Argens; to his daughter, who was also a good scholar, I gave a Latin tragedy. The *Iliad* had Porphyry's comment; it was a copy of a rare edition and was richly bound.

As the marquis came to Aix to thank me, I had to pay another visit to the country house. In the evening I drove back in an open carriage. I had no cloak and a cold north wind was blowing, I was perishing with cold but, instead of going to bed at once, I accompanied the Berliner to the house of a woman who had a daughter of the utmost beauty. Though the girl was only fourteen, she had all the indications

of the marriageable age and yet none of the Provençal amateurs had succeeded in making her see daylight. My friend had already made several unsuccessful efforts. I laughed at him, as I knew it was all a cheat, and I followed him to the house with the idea of making the young impostor dismount from her high horse, as I had done in similar cases in England and Metz.

We set to work and, far from resisting, the girl said she would be only too glad to get rid of the troublesome burden.

I saw that the difficulty proceeded only from the way she held herself, and I ought first to have whipped her, as I had done in Venice twenty-five years before, but I was foolish enough to try to take the citadel by direct attack. But my age of miracles was gone. I wearied myself to no purpose for a couple of hours and then went to my inn, leaving the young Prussian to do his best.

I went to bed with a pain in my side and after six hours' sleep awoke feeling thoroughly ill. I had pleurisy. My landlord called in an old doctor, who refused to let my blood. A severe cough came on and the next day I began to spit blood. In six or seven days the malady became so serious that I was confessed and received the last sacraments.

On the tenth day, the disease having abated for three days, my clever old doctor answered for my life, but I continued to spit blood till the eighteenth day.

My convalescence lasted for three weeks and I found it more trying than actual illness, for a man in pain has no time to be bored. Throughout the whole case I was tended day and night by a strange woman of whom I knew nothing. She nursed me with the tenderest care and I was waiting until I got well to give her my sincere thanks.

She was not an old woman, neither was she attractive-looking. She had slept in my room all the time.

After Eastertide, feeling I was well enough to venture out, I thanked her to the best of my ability and asked who had sent her to me. She told me it was the doctor and so bade me farewell.

A few days later, when I thanked my old doctor for having procured me such a capital nurse, he stared at me and said he knew nothing about the woman. I was puzzled and asked my landlady if she could throw any light on the strange nurse's identity, but she knew nothing and her ignorance seemed universal. I could not discover whence or how she came to attend me.

After my convalescence I took care to get all the letters which had been awaiting me and amongst them was a letter from my brother in Paris in answer to the epistle I wrote him from Perpignan. He acknowledged my letter and told me how delighted he had been to receive it, after having heard the dreadful news that I had been assassinated on the borders of Catalonia at the beginning of January.

"The person who gave me the news," my brother added, "was one of your best friends, Count Manucci, an attaché at the Venetian embassy. He said there could be no doubt as to the truth of the report."

This letter was like a flash of lightning to me. This good friend of mine had carried his vengeance so far as to hire assassins to deprive me of my life.

Manucci had gone a little too far.

He must have felt pretty well qualified to prophesy, since he was so certain of my death. He might have known that, in thus proclaiming in advance the manner of my death, he was also proclaiming himself as my murderer. I met him in Rome two years later, and, when I would have made him confess his guilt, he denied everything, saying he had received the news from Barcelona; however, we will speak of this in its proper place.

I dined and supped every day at the *table d'hôte* and one day I heard the company talking of two pilgrims, a man and a woman, recently arrived. They were Italians and were returning from Saint James of Compostella. They were said to be high-born folks, as they had distributed large alms on their entry into the town.

It was said that the female pilgrim, who had gone to bed on her arrival, was charming. They were staying at the same inn as I and we all got very curious about them.

As an Italian, I put myself at the head of the band who proceeded to call on the pilgrims, who, in my opinion, must be either fanatics or rogues

We found the lady sitting in an armchair, looking very tired. She was young, beautiful and melancholy-looking, and in her hands she held a brass crucifix some six inches long. She laid it down when we came in, and got up and received us most graciously. Her companion, who was arranging cockle-shells on his black mantle, did not stir; he seemed to say, by glancing at his wife, that we must confine our attentions to her. He seemed a man of twenty-four or twenty-five years of age. He was short and badly hung and his face bore all the indications of daring, impudence, sarcasm and imposture. His wife, on the other hand, was all meekness and simplicity and had that modesty which adds so much to the charm of feminine beauty. They spoke only just enough French to make themselves understood on their journey and, when they heard me addressing them in Italian, they seemed much relieved.

The lady told me she was Roman, but I could have guessed as much from her accent. I judged the man to be a Neapolitan or a Sicilian. Their passport, dated Rome, called him Balsamo, while she bore the name of Serafina Feliciani, which she still retains. Ten years later, we shall hear more of the man under the name of Cagliostro, or Pellegrini.

"We are going back to Rome," said she, "well pleased with our devotions to Saint James of Compostella and to Our Lady del Pilar. We have walked the whole way on foot, living on alms, so as more surely to win the mercy of the God whom I have offended so grievously all my life. In vain have I asked only a sou in charity; people have always given me silver and even gold, so that, in every town we came to, we have had to give what remained to the poor, so as not to offend God by lack of faith in His eternal Providence.

"My husband is strong and has not suffered much, but I have found so much walking very fatiguing, sleeping on straw or on bad beds, always with my clothes on, to avoid contracting diseases it would be hard to get rid of afterwards."

It seemed to me that this last circumstance was added to make us wish we could see whether the rest of her body compared with her hands and arms in whiteness and cleanliness.

"Do you think of making any stay here, madame?"

"My weariness will oblige us to stay three days; then we shall go to Rome by the way of Turin, where we shall pay our devotion to the Holy Sudary."

"You know, of course, that there are several of them in Europe."

"So we have heard, but we are assured that the Sudary of Turin is the true one. It is the kerchief with which Saint Veronica wiped the face of Our Lord, who left the imprint of His divine face upon it."

We left them, well pleased with the appearance and manners of the lady pilgrim, but placing very little trust in her piety. I was still weak from my illness and she inspired me with no desires, but the others would gladly have supped with her if they had thought there was anything to follow.

The next day her husband asked me if I would come up and breakfast with them or if they should come down and breakfast with me. It would have been impolite to have replied "Neither," so I said I should be delighted to see them in my room.

At breakfast I asked the pilgrim what he did, and he replied that he was an artist.

He could not design a picture, but he could copy it and he assured me that he could copy an engraving so exactly that none could tell the copy from the original.

"I congratulate you. If you are not a rich man, you are, at least, certain of earning a living with this talent."

"Everybody says the same, but it is a mistake. I have pursued this craft in Rome and Naples and found I had to work all day to make half a *tester* and that's not enough to live on."

He then showed me some fans he had done and I thought them most beautiful. They were done in pen and ink and the finest copperplate could not have surpassed them.

Next he showed me a copy from a Rembrandt, which, if anything, was finer than the original. In spite of all, he swore that the work he got barely supported him, but I did not believe what he said. He was a weak genius, who preferred a vagabond life to methodical labour.

I offered a louis for one of his fans, but he refused to take it, begging me to accept the fan as a gift and to make a collection for him at the *table d'hôte*, as he wanted to start the day after next. I accepted the present and promised to do as he desired, and succeeded in making up a purse of two hundred francs for them.

The woman had the most virtuous air. She was asked to write her

name on a lottery ticket but refused, saying that no honest girls were taught to write in Rome.

Everybody laughed at this excuse except myself and I pitied her, as I could see that she was of very low origin.

The next day she came and asked me to give her a letter of introduction for Avignon. I wrote her out two, one to M. Audifret, the banker, and the other to the landlady of the inn. In the evening she returned me the letter to the banker, saying it was not necessary for their purposes. At the same time she asked me to examine the letter closely, to see if it was really the same document I had given her. I did so and said I was sure it was my letter.

She laughed and told me I was mistaken, as it was only a copy. "Impossible!"

She called her husband, who came with the letter in his hand.

I could doubt no longer and said to him:

"You are a man of talents, for it is much harder to imitate a hand-writing than an engraving. You ought to make this talent serve you in good stead; but be careful or it may cost you your life."

The next day, the couple left Aix. In ten years, I saw the man again under the name of Count Pellegrini, with the virtuous Serafina, his wife and also his lost soul.

At the present time, he is in a prison which he will probably never leave, and his wife is happy, maybe, in a convent.

CHAPTER 131

As soon as I had regained my usual strength, I went to take leave of the Marquis d'Argens and his brother. I dined with them, pretending not to observe the presence of the Jesuit, and I then spent three delightful hours in conversation with the learned and amiable Marquis d'Argens. He told me a number of interesting anecdotes about the private life of Frederick II. No doubt the reader would like to have them, but I lack the energy to set them down. Perhaps some other day, when the mists about Dux have dispersed and some rays of the sun shine in upon me, I shall commit all these anecdotes to paper, but now I have not the courage to do so.

Frederick had his good and his bad qualities, like all great men, but, when every deduction on the score of his failings has been made, he still remains the noblest figure in the eighteenth century.

The King of Sweden, who was assassinated, loved to excite hatred that he might have the glory of defying it to do its worst. He was a despot at heart and came to a despot's end. He might have foreseen a violent death, for throughout his life he was always provoking men to the point of despair. There can be no comparison between him and Frederick.

The Marquis d'Argens made me a present of all his works and, on my asking him if I could congratulate myself on possessing the whole

number, he said "yes," with the exception of a fragment of autobiography which he had written in his youth and which he had afterwards suppressed.

"Why so?" I asked.

"Because I was foolish enough to write the truth. Never give way to this temptation, if it assails you. If you once begin on this plan, you are not only compelled to record all your vices and follies, but to treat them in the severe tone of a philosophical historian. You must not, of course, omit the good you may have done; and so praise and blame are mingled on every page. All the evil you say of yourself will be regarded as gospel truth; your peccadillos will be made into crimes and your good deeds will not only be received with incredulity, but you will be taxed with pride and vanity for having recorded them. Besides, if you write your memoirs, you make an enemy in every chapter if you once begin to tell the truth. A man should neither talk nor write of himself, unless it be to refute some calumny or libel."

I was convinced and promised never to be guilty of such a folly, but, in spite of that, I have been writing memoirs for the last seven years and, though I repent of having begun, I have sworn to go on to the end. However, I write in the hope that my *Memoirs* may never see the light of day; in the first place, the infamous censorship, which snuffs out the light of intelligence, would never allow them to be printed; and, secondly, I am so conceited as to think that, when my last illness comes, unable any longer to play the fool, I shall be wise enough to have all my papers burnt before my eyes. If that be not the case, I count on the indulgence of my readers, who should remember that I have written my story only to prevent my going mad in the midst of all the petty insults and annoyances which I have to bear every day from the envious rascals who live with me in this castle of Count Waldstein, or Wallenstein, at Dux. I write ten or twelve hours a day and thus keep black melancholy at bay. My readers shall hear more of my sufferings later on, if I do not die before I write them down.

The day after Corpus Christi, I left Aix for Marseilles. But here I must set down a circumstance that I had forgotten—I mean the procession of Corpus Christi.

Everyone knows that this festival is celebrated with great ceremony all over Christendom; but at Aix these ceremonies are of such a nature that every man of sense must be shocked at my recital.

It is well known that this procession in honour of the "Being of beings," represented under the sacramental forms, is followed by all the religious confraternities and this is duly done at Aix; but the scandalous part of the ceremony is the folly and the buffoonery which is allowed in a rite that should be designed to stir the hearts of men to awe and reverence for their Creator.

Instead of that, the Devil, Death and the Seven Deadly Sins are impersonated in the procession. They are clad in the most absurd costumes and make hideous contortions, beating and abusing each other

in their supposed vexation at having to join in the Creator's praises. The people hoot and hiss them, the lower classes sing songs in derision of them and play them all manner of tricks, and the whole scene is one of incredible noise, uproar and confusion, more worthy of some pagan bacchanalia than a procession of Christian people. All the country folk for five or six leagues around Aix pour into the town on that day to do honour to God. It is the only occasion of the kind and the clergy, either knavish or ignorant, encourage all this shameful riot. The lower orders take it all in good faith and anyone who raised any objection would run some risk, for the bishop walks at the head of the whole farce and consequently it is all holy.

I expressed to a councillor of parliament, M. de Saint-Marc, my disapproval of the entire affair, as being likely to bring discredit on religion, but he told me gravely that it was an excellent thing, as it brought no less than a hundred thousand francs into the town on the single day. I could find no reply to this very weighty reason.

Every day I spent at Aix, I thought of Henriette. I knew her real name and, remembering the message she had sent me by Marcoline, I hoped to meet her in some assembly, being ready to adapt my conduct to hers. I had often heard her name mentioned, but I never allowed myself to ask any questions, not wishing our old friendship to be suspected. Believing her to be at her country house, I had resolved on paying her a visit and had stayed on at Aix only so as to recover my health before seeking her. In due course I left Aix with a letter in my pocket for her, resolving to send it in and remain in my carriage till she asked me to come in.

We arrived at her residence at eleven o'clock. A man came to the door, took my letter and said Madame should have it without fail.

"Then she is not here."

"No, sir; she is at Aix."

"Since when?"

"For the last six months."

"Where does she live?"

"In her town house. She will be coming here in three weeks to spend the summer as usual."

"Will you let me write a letter?"

"If you will get out of your carriage, you will find all the necessary materials in Madame's room."

I went into the house and, to my extreme surprise, found myself face to face with the woman who had nursed me through my illness.

"You live here, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Since when?"

"For the last ten years."

"How did you come to nurse me?"

"If you will step upstairs, I will tell you."

Her story was as follows:

"Madame sent for me in haste and told me to go and attend to you

as if it were herself. She told me to say that the doctor had sent me, if you asked any questions."

"The doctor said he didn't know you."

"Perhaps he was speaking the truth, but most likely he had received orders from Madame. That's all I know, but I wonder you did not see her in Aix."

"She cannot be seeing any company, for I have been everywhere."

"She does not see any company at her own house, but she goes everywhere."

"It's very strange. I must have seen her and yet I do not think I could have passed her by unrecognised. You have been with her ten years?"

"Yes, sir, as I had the honour of informing you."

"Has she changed? Has she had any sickness? Has she aged?"

"Not at all. She has become rather stout, but I assure you, you would take her for a woman of thirty."

"I must be blind, or I cannot have seen her. I am going to write to her now."

The woman went out, leaving me in astonishment at the extraordinary situation in which I was placed.

"Ought I to return to Aix immediately?" I asked myself. "She has a town house, but does not see company and yet surely she might see me. She loves me still. She cared for me all through my illness and she would not have done so if she had become indifferent to me. She may be hurt at my not recognising her. She must know that I have left Aix and will no doubt guess that I am here now. Shall I go to her or shall I write?"

I resolved to write and I told her in my letter that I would await her reply in Marseilles. I gave the letter to my late nurse, with some money to insure its being despatched at once, and drove on to Marseilles, where I alighted at an obscure inn, not wishing to be recognised. I had scarcely got out of my carriage when I saw Madame Schizza, Nina's sister. She had left Barcelona with her husband. They had been in Marseilles three or four days and were going to Leghorn.

Madame Schizza was alone at the moment, her husband having gone out, and, as I was full of curiosity, I begged her to come up to my room while my dinner was getting ready.

"What is your sister doing? Is she still in Barcelona?"

"Yes, but she will not be there long, for the bishop will not have her in the town or the diocese and the bishop is stronger than the viceroy. She returned to Barcelona only on the plea that she wished to pass through Catalonia on her way home, but she does not need to stay there nine or ten months on that account. She will have to leave in a month for certain, but she is not much put out, as the viceroy is sure to keep her, wherever she goes, and she may eventually succeed in ruining him. In the meanwhile, she is revelling in the bad repute she has gained for her lover."

"I know something of her peculiarities, but she cannot dislike a man who has made her rich."

"Rich! She has only her diamonds. But do you imagine that monster capable of any feelings of gratitude? She is not a human being and no one knows her as I do. She has made the count commit a hundred acts of injustice so that all Spain should talk of her and know that she has made herself mistress of his body and soul and all he has. The worse his actions are, the more certain she feels that people will talk of her, and that is all she wants. Her obligations to me are beyond counting, for she owes me all, even to her existence, and, instead of continuing my husband in her service, she sent him about his business."

"Then I wonder how she came to treat me so generously."

"If you knew all you would not feel grateful to her."

"Tell me all, then."

"She paid for your keep at the inn and in prison only to make people believe you were her lover, and to shame the count. All Barcelona knows that you were murderously attacked at her door and that you were fortunate enough to run the fellow through."

"But she cannot have been the instigator of, or even an accomplice in, the plot for my assassination. That's against nature."

"I dare say, but everything in Nina is against nature. What I tell you is the bare truth, for I was a witness of it all. Whenever the viceroy visited her, she wearied him with praise of your gallantry, your wit, your noble actions, comparing you with the Spaniards, greatly to their disadvantage. The count got impatient and told her to talk of something else, but she would not; and at last he went away, cursing your name. Two days before you came to grief, he left her saying, '*Válgame Dios!* I will give you a pleasure you do not expect'."

"I assure you that, when we heard the pistol-shot after you had gone, she remarked, without evincing the slightest emotion, that the shot was the 'pleasure' her rascally Spaniard had promised her. I said that you might be killed. 'So much the worse for the count,' she replied, 'for his turn will come also.' Then she began laughing like a madcap, thinking of the excitement your death would cause in Barcelona."

"At eight o'clock the following day your man came and told her you had been taken to the citadel, and I will say to her credit, she seemed relieved to hear you were alive."

"My man? I did not know he was in correspondence with her."

"No, I suppose not; but I assure you the worthy man was very much attached to you."

"I am sure he was. Go on."

"Nina then wrote a note to your landlord. She did not show it me, but it no doubt contained instructions to supply you with everything."

"The man told us he had seen your sword all red with blood and that your cloak had a bullet hole through it. She was delighted, but do not think it was because she loved you; she was glad you had escaped, that you might take your revenge. However, she was troubled by the pretext on which the count had had you arrested."

"Ricla did not come to see her that day, but he came the next day at eight o'clock and the infamous creature received him with a smiling face. She told him she had heard he had imprisoned you and that she was obliged to him, as he had, of course, done so to protect you from any fresh attempts on your life.

"He answered dryly that your arrest had nothing to do with anything that might have happened the night before. He added that you had been seized only pending the examination of your papers and that, if they were found to be in good form, you would be set at liberty in the course of a few days.

"Nina asked him who was the man you had wounded. He replied that the police were inquiring into the matter, but that so far they had found neither a dead man nor a wounded man nor any traces of blood. All that had been found was Casanova's hat and this had been returned to him.

"I left them alone together till midnight, so I cannot say what further converse they may have had on the subject, but three or four days later everybody knew that you were imprisoned in the tower.

"Nina asked the count that evening the reason of this severity and he replied that your passports were thought to be forgeries, because you were in disgrace with the State Inquisitors and therefore would not be in a position to get a passport from the Venetian ambassador. On this supposition, he said, you had been placed in the tower and, if it proved to be true, you would be still more severely punished.

"This news disturbed us and, when we heard that Pogomas had been arrested, we felt certain he had denounced you in revenge for your having procured his dismissal from Nina's house. When we heard he had been let out and sent to Genoa, we expected to hear of your being set at liberty, as the authorities must have been satisfied of the genuine character of your passports; but you were still shut up and Nina did not know what to think and the count would not answer her when she made inquiries about you. She had made up her mind to say no more about it when at last we heard you had been set free and that your passports had been declared genuine.

"Nina expected to see you in the pit of the opera house and made preparations for a triumph in her box, but she was in despair when she heard that no performance was to be given. In the evening the count told her your passports had been returned with the order to leave in three days. The false creature praised her lover's prudence to his face but cursed him in her heart.

"She knew you would not dare to come to see her and, when you left without writing her a note, she believed you had received secret orders not to hold any further communications with her. She was furious with the viceroy. 'If Casanova had had the courage to ask me to go with him, I would have gone,' said she.

"Your man told her of your fortunate escape from three assassins. That evening she complimented Ricla on the circumstance, but he

swore he knew nothing about it. Nina did not believe him. You may thank God from the bottom of your heart that you ever left Spain alive after knowing Nina. She would have cost you your life at last, this monster who punishes me for having given her life."

"What! Are you her mother?"

"Yes; Nina, that horrible creature, is my daughter."

"Really? Everybody says you are her sister."

"That is the horrible part of it; everybody is right."

"Explain yourself."

"Yes, though it is to my shame. She is my daughter and at the same time my sister, for she is the daughter of my father."

"What! Your father loved you?"

"I do not know whether the scoundrel loved me, but he treated me as his wife. I was sixteen then. She is the daughter of the crime and God knows she is sufficient punishment for it. My father died to escape her vengeance; may he also escape the vengeance of God! I should have strangled her in her cradle, but maybe I shall strangle her yet. If I do not, she will kill me."

I remained dumb at the conclusion of this dreadful story, which bore all the marks of truth.

"Does Nina know that you are her mother?"

"Her own father told her the secret when she was twelve, after he had initiated her into the life she has been living ever since. He would have made her a mother in her turn if he had not killed himself the same year, maybe to escape the gallows."

"How did Count de Ricla fall in love with her?"

"It is a short story and a curious one. Two years ago she came to Barcelona from Portugal and was placed in one of the ballets because of her pretty face, for, as for talent, she had none and could do only the *rebaltade* (a sort of skip and pirouette). The first evening she danced, she was loudly applauded by the pit, for, as she did the *rebaltade*, she showed her drawers up to her waist. In Spain any actress who shows her drawers on the stage is liable to a fine of one crown. Nina knew nothing about this and, hearing the applause, treated the audience to another skip of the same kind, but at the end of the ballet she was told to pay two crowns for her immodesty. Nina cursed and swore, but she had to give in. What do you think she did to elude the law and at the same time avenge herself?"

"Danced badly, perhaps."

"She danced without any drawers at all and did her *rebaltade* as before, which caused such an effervescence of high spirits in the house as had never been known in Barcelona. Count de Ricla had seen her from his box and was divided between horror and admiration and sent for the inspector, to tell him that this impudent creature must be punished. 'In the meantime,' said he, 'bring her before me.'

"Presently Nina appeared in the viceroy's box and asked him impudently what he wanted with her.

" 'You are an immodest woman and have failed in your duty to the public.'

" 'What have I done?'

" 'You performed the same skip as before.'

" 'Yes, but I haven't broken your law, for no one can have seen my drawers, as I took the precaution not to put any on. What more can I do for your cursed law, which has cost me two crowns already? Just tell me.'

"The viceroy and the great personages around him had much ado to refrain from laughter, for Nina was really in the right and a serious discussion of the violated law would have been ridiculous. The viceroy felt he was in a false position and merely said that, if she ever danced without drawers again, she would have a month's imprisonment on bread and water.

"A week after, one of my husband's ballets was given. It was so well received that the audience encored it with enthusiasm. Ricla gave orders that the public should be satisfied, and all the dancers were told they would have to reappear. Nina, who was almost undressed, told my husband to do as best as he could, as she was not going to dance again. As she had the chief part, my husband could not do without her and sent the manager to her dressing-room. She pushed the poor man out with so much violence that he fell against the wall of the passage, head foremost.

"The manager told his piteous tale to the viceroy, who ordered two soldiers to bring her before him. This was his ruin; for Nina is a beautiful woman and, in the state of undress she was then in, she would have seduced the coldest of men.

"The count reproved her, but his voice and his manner were ill-assured and, growing bolder as she watched his embarrassment, Nina replied that he might have her torn to pieces if he liked, but she would not dance against her will and nowhere in her agreement was it stipulated that she should dance twice in the same evening, whether for his pleasure or anyone else's. She also expressed her anger at his making her appear before him in a state of semi-nudity and swore she would never forgive his barbarous and despotical conduct.

" 'I will dance no more before you or your people. Let me go away or kill me if you like; do your worst with me and you shall find that I am a Venetian and a free woman!'

"The viceroy sat astonished and said she must be mad. He then summoned my husband and told him to have the ballet put on without her and that she was no longer in his service. He told Nina to go and ordered that she be set free. She went back to her dressing-room and came to us, where she was living.

"The ballet went on without her, the poor viceroy paying little attention, for the poison had entered into his veins.

"The next day, a wretched singer named Molinari called on Nina and told her the viceroy was anxious to know whether she were really mad or not and would like to see her in a country house, the name of

which he mentioned; this was just what the wretched woman wanted. 'Tell His Highness,' she said to Molinari, 'that I will come and that he will find me as gentle as a lamb and as good as an angel.'

"That is the way in which the connection began and she fathomed his character so astutely that she has maintained her conquest as much with ill-treatment and severity as with her favours."

Such was the tale of the hapless Madame Schizza. It was told with all the passion of an Italian, divided between repentance for the past and the desire of vengeance.

The next day, as I had expected, I received a letter from Henriette. It ran as follows:

"My Dear Old Friend,—Nothing could be more romantic than our meeting at my country house six years ago, and now again, after a parting of so many years. Naturally, we have both grown older and, though I love you still, I am glad you did not recognise me. Not that I have become ugly, but I am stout and this has altered my looks. I am a widow and well enough off to tell you that, if you lack money, you will find some ready for you in Henriette's purse. Do not come back to Aix to see me, as your return might give rise to gossip; but, if you chance to come here again after some time, we may meet, though not as old acquaintances. I am happy to think that I perhaps prolonged your days by giving you a nurse for whose trustworthiness I could answer. If you would like to correspond with me, I should be happy to do my part. I am very curious to know what happened to you after your flight from The Leads and, after the proofs you have given me of your discretion, I think I shall be able to tell you how we came to meet at Cesena and how I returned to my country. The first part is a secret for everyone; only M. d'Antoine is acquainted with a portion of the story. I am grateful for the reticence you have observed, though Marcoline must have delivered the message I gave her. Tell me what has become of that beautiful girl. Farewell!"

I replied accepting her offer to correspond, and I told her the whole story of my adventures. From her I received forty letters, in which the history of her life is given. If she dies before me, I shall add these letters to my *Memoirs*, but at present she is alive and happy, though advanced in years.

The day after I went to call on Madame Audibert and we went together to see Madame N— N—, who was already the mother of three children. Her husband adored her and she was very happy. I gave her good news of Marcoline and told the story of Croce and of Charlotte's death, which affected her to tears.

In her turn she told me about Rosalie, who was quite a rich woman. I had no hopes of seeing her again, for she lived in Genoa and I should not have cared to face M. Grimaldi.

My niece (as I once called her) mortified me unintentionally; she said I was aging. Though a man can easily make a jest of his advancing years, a speech like this is not pleasant when one has not abandoned

the pursuit of pleasure. She gave me a capital dinner and her husband made me offers which I was ashamed to accept. I had fifty louis and, intending to go on to Turin, I did not feel uneasy about the future.

At Marseilles I met the Duc de Vilardi, who was being kept alive by the art of Tronchin. This nobleman, who was Governor of Provence, asked me to supper and I was surprised to meet at his house the self-styled Marquis d'Aragon; he was engaged in holding the bank. I staked a few coins and lost and the marquis asked me to dine with him and his wife, an elderly Englishwoman who had brought him a dowry of forty thousand guineas absolutely, with twenty thousand guineas which would ultimately go to her son in London. I was not ashamed to borrow fifty louis from this lucky rascal, though I felt almost certain I should never return the money.

I left Marseilles by myself and, after crossing the Alps, arrived at Turin.

There I had a warm welcome from Chevalier Raiberti and the Comte de la Pérouse. Both of them pronounced me to be looking older, but I consoled myself with the thought that, after all, I was only forty-four.

I became an intimate friend of the English ambassador, Sir N— N—, a rich, accomplished and cultured man, who kept the choicest of tables. Everybody loved him and, amongst others, this feeling was warmly shared by a Parmese girl named Campioni, who was wonderfully beautiful.

As soon as I had told my friends that I intended to go into Switzerland, to print at my own expense a refutation in Italian of the *History of the Venetian Government*, by Amelot de la Houssaye, they all did their best by subscribing and obtaining subscriptions. The most generous of all was the Comte de la Pérouse, who gave me two hundred and fifty francs for fifty copies. I left Turin in a week with two thousand lire in my purse. With this, I should be able to print the book I had composed in my prison; but I should have to rewrite it *ab initio*, with the volume to my hand, as also the *History of Venice*, by Nani.

When I had gotten these works, I set out, with the intention of having my book printed at Lugano, as there was a good press there and no censorship. I also knew that the head of the press was a well read man and that the place abounded in good cheer and good society.

Lugano is near Milan, Como and Lake Maggiore and I was well pleased with the situation. I went to the best inn, which was kept by a man named Tagoretti, who gave me the best room in the house.

The day after my arrival I called on Dr. Agnelli who was at once printer, priest, theologian and an honest man. I made a regular agreement with him, he engaging to print at the rate of four sheets a week, and, on my side, I promised to pay him every week. He reserved the right of censorship, expressing a hope that our opinions might coincide.

I gave him the preface and the preliminary matter at once and chose the paper and the size, large octavo.

When I got back to my inn, the landlord told me that the *bargello*, or chief constable, wanted to see me.

Although Lugano is in Switzerland, its municipal government is modelled after that of the Italian towns.

I was curious to hear what this ill-omened personage could have to say to me, so I told them to show him in. After giving me a profound bow, with his hat in his hand, the signor *bargello* told me that he had come to offer me his services and to assure me that I should enjoy complete tranquillity and safety in Lugano, whether from any enemies within the State or from the Venetian Government, in case I had any dispute with it.

"I thank you, signor," I replied, "and I am sure that you are telling me the truth, as I am in Switzerland."

"I must take the liberty of telling you, sir, that it is customary for strangers who take up their residence in Lugano to pay some trifling sum, either by the week, the month or the year."

"And if they refuse to pay?"

"Then their safety is not so sure."

"Money does everything in Lugano, I suppose."

"But, sir . . ."

"I understand, but let me tell you that I have no fears and I shall consequently beg to be excused from paying anything."

"You will forgive me, but I happen to know that you have some disputes with the Venetian Government."

"You are mistaken, my good fellow."

"No, I am not."

"If you are so sure, find someone to bet me two hundred sequins that I have reason to fear the Venetian Government; I will take the bet and deposit the amount."

The *bargello* remained silent and the landlord told him he seemed to have made some kind of mistake, so he went away, looking very disappointed.

My landlord was delighted to hear that I thought of making some stay in Lugano and advised me to call on the high bailiff, who governed the place.

"He's a very nice Swiss gentleman," said he, "and his wife is a clever woman and as fair as the day."

"I will go to see him to-morrow."

I sent in my name to the high bailiff at noon on the day following and what was my surprise to find myself in the presence of M. de R—and his charming wife! Beside her was a pretty boy, five or six years old.

Our mutual surprise may be imagined!

CHAPTER 132

THESE unforeseen, chance meetings with old friends have always been the happiest moments of my life.

We all remained for some time dumb with delight. M. de R— was the first to break the silence by giving me a cordial embrace. We burst into mutual excuses, he for having imagined that there might be other Casanovas in Italy and I for not having ascertained his name. He made me take pot-luck with him the same day and we seemed as if we had never been parted. The Republic had given him this employ, a very lucrative one, and he was only sorry that it would expire in two years. He told me he was delighted to be able to be of use to me and begged me to consider he was wholly at my service. He was delighted to hear that I should be engaged for three or four months in seeing my work through the press and seemed vexed when I told him I could not accept his hospitality more than once a week, as my labours would be incessant.

Madame de R— could scarce recover from her surprise. It was nine years since I had seen her at Soleure and then I thought her beauty must be at its zenith; but I was wrong, she was still more beautiful, and I told her so. She showed me her only child, born four years after my departure. She cherished the child as the apple of her eye and seemed likely to spoil it; but I heard a few years ago that this child is now an amiable and accomplished man.

In a quarter of an hour, Madame de R— informed me of all that had happened at Soleure since my departure. Lebel had gone to Besançon, where he was living happily with his charming wife.

She happened to observe in a casual way that I no longer looked as young as at Soleure and this made me regulate my conduct in a manner I might not otherwise have done. I did not let her beauty carry me away; I resisted the effect of her charms and was content to enjoy her friendship and be worthy of the friendship of her good husband.

The work on which I was engaged demanded all my care and attention and a love affair would have wasted most of my time.

I began work the next morning and, save for an hour's visit from M. de R—, wrote on till nightfall. The next day I had the first proof-sheet, with which I was rather well pleased.

I spent the whole of the next month in my room, working assiduously and going out only to mass on feast days, to dine with M. de R— and to walk with his wife and her child.

At the end of a month my first volume was printed and stitched and the manuscript of the second volume was ready for the press. Towards the end of October the printer sent in the entire work in three volumes; in less than a year the edition was sold out.

My object was not so much to make money as to appease the wrath of the Venetian Inquisitors; I had gone all over Europe and now experienced a violent desire to see my native land once more.

Amelot de la Houssaye had written his book from the point of view of an enemy of Venice. His history was rather a satire, containing learned and slanderous observations mingled together. It had been published for seventy years, but until then no one had taken the trouble

to refute it. If a Venetian had attempted to do so, he would not have obtained permission from his Government to print it in the States of Venice, for the State policy is to allow no one to discuss the actions of the authorities, whether in praise or blame; consequently, no writer had attempted to refute the French history, as it was well known that the refutation would be visited with punishment and not with reward.

My position was an exceptional one. I had been persecuted by the Venetian Government, so no one could accuse me of being partial; and, by my exposing the calumnies of Amelot before all Europe I hoped to gain a reward, which after all would only be an act of justice. I had been an exile for fourteen years and I thought the Inquisitors would be glad to repair their injustice, on the pretext of rewarding my patriotism. My readers will see that my hopes were fulfilled, but I had to wait five more years, instead of receiving permission to return at once.

M. de Bragadin was dead and Dandolo and Barbaro were the only friends I had left in Venice, with their aid, but secretly, I secured fifty subscribers to my book in my native town.

Throughout my stay at Lugano I frequented only the house of M. de R—, where I saw the Abbé Riva, a learned and discreet man, to whom I had been commended by M. Querini, his relation. The abbé enjoyed such a reputation for wisdom amongst his fellow-countrymen that he was a kind of arbiter in all disputes and thus the expenses of the law were saved. It was no wonder that the gentlemen of the long robe hated him most cordially. His nephew, Jean-Baptiste Riva, was a friend of the Muses, of Bacchus and of Venus; he was also a friend of mine, though I could not match him with the bottles. He lent me all the nymphs he had initiated into the mysteries, and they liked him all the better, as I made them some small presents. With him and his two pretty sisters, I went to the Borromean Isles. I knew that Count Borromeo, who had honoured me with his friendship at Turin, was there, and from him I felt certain of a warm welcome. One of the two sisters had to pass for Riva's wife and the other for his sister-in-law.

Although the count was a ruined man, he lived in his isles like a prince.

It would be impossible to describe these "Islands of the Blest"; they must be seen to be imagined. The inhabitants enjoy an everlasting spring; there is neither heat nor cold.

The count regaled us choicely and amused the two girls by giving them rods and lines and letting them fish. Although he was ugly, old and ruined, he still possessed the art of pleasing.

On the way back to Lugano, as I was making way for a carriage in a narrow road, my horse slipped and fell down a slope ten feet high. My head went against a large stone and I thought my last hour was come, as the blood poured out of the wound. However, I was well again in a few days. This was my last ride on horseback.

During my stay at Lugano the inspectors of the Swiss cantons came there on their rounds. The people dignified them with the magnificent

title of "ambassadors," but M. de R— was content to call them *avoyers*.

These gentlemen stayed at my inn and I had my meals with them throughout their stay.

The *avoyer* of Berne gave me some news of my poor friend M. F—. His charming daughter Sara had become the wife of M. de V— and was happy.

A few days after these pleasant and cultured men had left, I was startled one morning by the sudden appearance of the wretched Marazzani in my room. I seized him by his collar, threw him out and, before he had time to use his cane or his sword, I had kicked, beaten and boxed him most soundly. He defended himself to the best of his ability and the landlord and his men ran up at the noise and had some difficulty in separating us.

"Don't let him go!" I cried. "Send for the *bargello* and have him taken away to prison."

I dressed hastily and, as I was going out to see M. de R—, the *bargello* met me and asked on what charge I gave the man into custody.

"You will hear that at M. de R—'s, where I will await you."

I must now explain my anger. You may remember, reader, that I left the wretched fellow in the prison of Buen Retiro. I heard afterwards that the King of Spain, Jerusalem and the Canary Islands had given him a small post in a galley off the coast of Africa. He had done me no harm and I pitied him, but, not being his intimate friend and having no power to mitigate the hardship of his lot, I had well-nigh forgotten him.

Eight months after I met at Barcelona Madame Bellucci, a Venetian dancer with whom I had had a small intrigue. She gave an exclamation of delight on seeing me and said she was glad to find me delivered from the hard fate to which a tyrannous government had condemned me.

"What fate is that?" I asked. "I have seen a good deal of misfortune since I left you."

"I mean the *presidio* "

"But that has never been my lot, thank God! Who told you such a story?"

"A Count Marazzani, who was here three weeks ago and told me he had been luckier than you, as he had made his escape."

"He's a liar and a scoundrel and, if ever I meet him again, he shall pay me dearly."

From that moment, I never thought of the rascal without feeling a lively desire to give him a thrashing, but I never thought chance would bring about so early a meeting.

Under the circumstances I think my behaviour will be thought only natural. I had beaten him, but that was not enough for me. I seemed to have done nothing and, indeed, I had received as good as I gave.

In the meantime, he was in prison and I went to M. de R— to see what he could do for me.

As soon as M. de R— heard my statement, he said he could neither keep him in prison nor drive him out of the town unless I laid a plea

before him, craving protection against this man, whom I believed to have come to Lugano with the purpose of assassinating me.

"You can make the document more effective," he added, "by placing your actual grievance in a strong light and laying stress on his sudden appearance in your room, without sending in his name. That's what you had better do, and it remains to be seen how I shall answer your plea. I shall ask him for his passport, delay the case and order him to be severely treated; but in the end I shall only be able to drive him out of the town, unless he can find good bail."

I could ask no more. I sent in my plea and the next day had the pleasure of seeing him brought into court, bound hand and foot.

M. de R— began to examine him and Marazzani swore he had no evil intentions in calling on me. As to the calumny, he protested he had only repeated common rumour, and professed his joy at finding it had been false. This ought to have been enough for me, but I continued obdurate. M. de R— said that my being sent to the galleys having been rumoured was no justification for his repeating it.

"And furthermore," he proceeded, "M. Casanova's suspicion that you were going to assassinate him is justified by your giving a false name, for the plaintiff maintains that you are not Count Marazzani at all. He offers to furnish surety on this behalf and, if M. Casanova does you wrong, his bail will escheat to you as damages. In the meantime, you will remain in prison till we have further information about your real status."

He was taken back and, as the poor devil had not a penny in his pocket, it would have been superfluous to tell the *bargello* to treat him severely.

M. de R— wrote to the Swiss agent at Parma to obtain the necessary information; but, as the rascal knew this would be against him, he wrote me a humble letter, in which he confessed that he was the son of a poor shopkeeper of Bobbio and, although his name was really Marazzani, he had nothing to do with the Marazzanis of Plaisance. He begged me to set him at liberty.

I showed the letter to M. de R—, who let him out of prison, with orders to leave Lugano in twenty-four hours. I thought I had been rather too harsh with him, and gave the poor devil some money to take him to Augsburg and also a letter for M. de Sellenthin, who was recruiting there for the Prussian King. We shall hear of Marazzani again.

The Chevalier de Brèche came to the Lugano fair to buy some horses and stopped a fortnight. I often met him at the home of M. de R—, for whose wife he had a great admiration, and I was sorry to see him go. I left Lugano myself a few days later, having made up my mind to winter in Turin, where I hoped to see some pleasant society.

Before I left, I received a friendly letter from Prince Lubomirski, with a bill of exchange for a hundred ducats in payment of fifty copies of my book. The prince had become lord high marshal on the death of Count Bilinski.

When I got to Turin, I found a letter from the noble Venetian, M.

Girolamo Zulian, the same that had given me an introduction to Mocenigo. His letter contained an enclosure to M. Berlendis, the representative of the Republic at Turin, who thanked me for presenting it and thereby relieving him of the embarrassment he felt at not venturing to receive me.

The ambassador, a rich man and a great lover of the fair sex, kept up a splendid establishment and this was enough for his Government, for intelligence is not considered a necessary qualification for a Venetian ambassador. Indeed, it is a positive disadvantage and a clever ambassador would no doubt fall into disfavour with the Venetian Senate. However, Berlendis ran no risk whatever on this score; the realm of wit was an unknown land to him.

I got this ambassador to call the attention of his Government to the work I had recently published, and the answer the State Inquisitors gave may astonish my readers, but it did not astonish me. The secretary of the famous and accursed Tribunal wrote him to say that he had done well to call the attention of the Inquisitors to this work, as the author's presumption appeared on the title page. He added that the work would be examined and in the meantime the ambassador was instructed to show me no signal marks of favour, lest the Court should suppose he was protecting me as a Venetian. Nevertheless, it was the same Tribunal that had facilitated my access to the ambassador to Madrid, Mocenigo.

I told Berlendis that my visits would be limited in number and free from all ostentation.

I was much interested in his son's tutor; he was a priest, a man of letters and a poet. His name was Andreis and he is now resident in England, where he enjoys full liberty, the greatest of all blessings.

I spent my time in Turin very pleasantly in the midst of a small circle of Epicureans; there were the old Chevalier Raiberti, the Comte de la Pérouse, a certain Abbé Roubien, a delightful man, the voluptuous Comte de Riva and the English ambassador. To the amusements which this society afforded, I added a course of reading, but no love affairs whatever.

While I was in Turin, a milliner, Pérouse's mistress, feeling herself *in articulo mortis*, swallowed the portrait of her lover, instead of the Eucharist. This incident made me compose two sonnets, which pleased me a good deal at the time and with which I am still satisfied. No doubt some will say that every poet is pleased with his own handiwork, but, as a matter of fact, the severest critic of a sensible author is himself.

The Russian squadron, under the command of Count Alexis Orloff, was then at Leghorn; this squadron was threatening Constantinople and would probably have taken it if an Englishman had been in command. As I had known Count Orloff in Russia, I imagined that I might possibly render myself of service to him and, at the same time, make my fortune.

The English ambassador having given me a letter for the English consul, I left Turin, with very little money in my purse and no letter

of credit on any banker. An Englishman named Acton commended me to an English banker at Leghorn, but this letter did not empower me to draw any money.

Acton was just then involved in a curious complication. When he was in Venice, he had fallen in love with a pretty woman, either a Greek or a Neapolitan. The husband, by birth a native of Turin and by profession a good-for-nothing, placed no obstacle in Acton's way, as the Englishman was generous with his money, but he had a knack of turning up at those moments when his absence would have been most desirable.

The generous but proud and impatient Englishman could not be expected to bear this for long. He consulted with the lady and determined to show his teeth. The husband persisted in his untimely visits and one day Acton said dryly:

"Do you want a thousand guineas? You can have them if you like, on condition that your wife travels with me for three years without our having the pleasure of your society."

The husband thought the bargain a good one and signed an agreement to that effect.

After the three years were over, the husband wrote to his wife, who was in Venice, to return to him and to Acton to put no obstacle in the way. The lady replied that she did not want to live with him any more and Acton explained to the husband that he could not be expected to drive his mistress against her will. He foresaw, however, that the husband would complain to the English ambassador, and he determined to be beforehand with him.

In due course the husband did apply to the English ambassador, requesting him to compel Acton to restore to him his lawful wife. He even asked the Chevalier Raiberti to write to the Commendatore Camarana, the Sardinian ambassador in Venice, to apply pressure on the Venetian Government, and he would doubtless have succeeded if M. Raiberti had done him this favour. However, as it was, he did nothing of the sort and even gave Acton a warm welcome when he came to Turin to look into the matter. He had left his mistress in Venice under the protection of the English consul.

The husband was ashamed to complain publicly, as he would have been confronted with the disgraceful agreement he had signed; but Berlendis maintained that he was in the right and argued the question in the most amusing manner. On the one hand, he urged the sacred and inviolable character of the marriage rite and, on the other, he showed how the wife was bound to submit to her husband in all things. I argued the matter with him myself, pointing out his disgraceful position in defending a man who traded on his wife's charms, and he was obliged to give in when I assured him that the husband had offered to renew the lease for the same time and on the same terms as before.

Two years later I met Acton at Bologna and admired the beauty whom he considered and treated as his wife. She held in her lap a fine little Acton.

I left Turin for Parma with a Venetian who, like myself, was an exile from his country. He had turned actor to gain a livelihood and was going to Parma with two actresses, one of whom was interesting. As soon as I found out who he was, we became friends and he would have gladly made me a partner in all his amusements by the way if I had been in the humour to join him.

This journey to Leghorn was undertaken under the influence of chimerical ideas. I thought I might be useful to Count Orloff in the conquest he was going to make, it was said, of Constantinople. I fancied that it had been decreed by Fate that without me he could never pass through the Dardanelles. In spite of the wild ideas with which my mind was occupied, I conceived a warm friendship for my travelling companion, whose name was Angelo Bentivoglio. The Government never forgave him a certain crime, which, to the philosophic eye, appears a mere trifle. Four years later, when I describe my stay in Venice, I shall give some further account of him.

About noon we reached Parma and I bade adieu to Bentivoglio and his friends. The Court was at Colorno, but, having nothing to gain from this mockery of a court and wishing to leave for Bologna the next morning, I asked Dubois-Chateleraux, Chief of the Mint and a talented, though vain, man, to invite me to dinner. The reader will remember that I had known him twenty-two years before, when I was in love with Henriette.

He was delighted to see me and seemed to set great store by my politeness in giving him the benefit of my short stay in Parma. I told him that Count Orloff was waiting for me in Leghorn, and I was obliged to travel day and night.

"He will be setting sail before long," said he. "I have advices from Leghorn to that effect."

I said in a mysterious tone of voice that he would not sail without me, and I could see that my host treated me with increased respect after this. He wanted to discuss the Russian Expedition, but my air of reserve made him change the conversation.

At dinner we talked a good deal about Henriette, whom he said he had succeeded in getting to know; but, though he spoke of her with great respect, I took care not to give him any information on the subject. He spent the whole afternoon uttering complaints against the sovereigns of Europe, the King of Prussia excepted, as he had made him a baron, though I never could make out why.

He cursed the Duke of Parma, who persisted in retaining his services, although there was no mint in existence in the duchy and his talents were consequently wasted there.

I listened to all his complaints and agreed that Louis XV had been ungrateful in not conferring the Order of St. Michael on him, that Venice had rewarded his services very shabbily, that Spain was stingy and Naples devoid of honesty, etc., etc. When he had finished, I asked him if he could give me a bill on a banker for fifty sequins.

He replied in the most friendly manner that he would not give me

the trouble of going to a banker for such a wretched sum as that; he would be delighted to oblige me himself.

I took the money, promising to repay him at an early date, but I have never been able to do so. I do not know whether he is alive or dead but, if he were to attain the age of Methuselah, I should not entertain any hopes of paying him, for I get poorer every day and feel that my end is not far off.

The next day I was in Bologna and the day after in Florence, where I met the Chevalier Morosini, nephew of the Venetian procurator, a young man of nineteen, who was travelling with Count Stratico, professor of mathematics at the University of Padua. He gave me a letter for his brother, a Jacobin monk and professor of literature at Pisa, where I stopped for a couple of hours on purpose to make the celebrated monk's acquaintance. I found him even greater than his fame and promised to come again to Pisa and make a longer stay for the purpose of enjoying his society.

I stopped an hour at the baths, where I made the acquaintance of the Pretender to the throne of Great Britain, and from there went on to Leghorn, where I found Count Orloff still waiting, but only because contrary winds kept him from sailing.

The English consul, with whom he was staying, introduced me at once to the Russian admiral, who received me with expressions of delight. He told me he would be charmed if I would come on board with him. He told me to have my luggage taken on board at once, as he would set sail with the first fair wind. When he was gone, the English consul asked me what would be my status with the admiral.

"That's just what I mean to find out before embarking my effects."

"You won't be able to speak to him till to-morrow."

The next morning I called on Count Orloff and sent him in a short note, asking him to give me a short interview before I embarked my mails. An officer came out to tell me that the admiral was writing in bed and hoped I would wait.

I had been waiting a few minutes when Da Loglio, the Polish agent in Venice and an old friend of mine, came in.

"What are you doing here, my dear Casanova?" said he.

"I am waiting for an interview with the admiral."

"He is very busy."

After this, Da Loglio coolly went into the admiral's room. This was impertinent of him; it was as if he had said in so many words that the admiral was too busy to see me but not too busy to see him.

A moment after, Marquis Manucci came in, with his Order of St. Anne and his formal air. He congratulated me on my visit to Leghorn and then said he had read my work on Venice and had been surprised to find himself in it. He had some reason for surprise, for there was no connection between him and the subject matter; but he should have discovered before that the unexpected often happens. He did not give me time to tell him so, but went into the admiral's room, as Da Loglio had done.

I was vexed to see how these gentlemen were admitted while I danced attendance, and the project of sailing with Orloff began to displease me.

In five hours Orloff came out, followed by a numerous train. He told me pleasantly that we could have our talk at table or after dinner.

"After dinner, if you please," I said.

He returned at two o'clock and sat down and I was among the guests. Orloff kept on saying, "Eat away, gentlemen, eat away," and read his correspondence and gave his secretary letters all the time.

After dinner, he suddenly glanced up at me and, taking me by the hand, led me to the window and told me to make haste with my luggage, as he would sail before morning, if the wind kept up.

"Quite so; but kindly tell me, count, what is to be my status or employment on board your ship?"

"At present, I have no special employ to give you; that will come in time. Come on board as my friend."

"The offer is an honourable one so far as you are concerned, but all the officers might treat me with contempt. I should be regarded as a kind of fool and I should probably kill the first man who dared to insult me. Give me a distinct office and let me wear your uniform. I will be useful to you. I know the country for which you are bound, I can speak the language and I am not wanting in courage."

"My dear sir, I really have no particular office to give you."

"Then, count, I wish you a pleasant sail; I am going to Rome. I hope you may never repent of not taking me for, without me you will never pass the Dardanelles."

"Is that a prophecy?"

"It's an oracle."

"We will test its accuracy, my dear Calchas."

Such was the short dialogue I had with the worthy count, who, as a matter of fact, did not pass the Dardanelles. Whether he would have succeeded if I had been on board is more than I can say.

The next day I delivered my letters to M. Rivarola and the English banker. The squadron had sailed in the early morning.

The day after I went to Pisa and spent a pleasant week in the company of Father Stratico, who was made a bishop two or three years later by means of a bold stroke that might have ruined him. He delivered a funeral oration over Father Ricci, the last general of the Jesuits. The Pope, Ganganelli, had the choice of punishing the writer and thereby gaining the hostility of many of the faithful, or rewarding him handsomely. The sovereign pontiff followed the latter course. I saw the bishop some years later and he told me in confidence that he had written the oration only because he felt certain, from his knowledge of the human heart, that his punishment would be a great reward.

This clever monk initiated me into all the charms of Pisan society. He had organised a little choir of ladies of rank, remarkable for their intelligence and beauty, and had taught them to sing *extempore* to the guitar. He had had them instructed by the famous Corilla, who was crowned poetess laureate at the capitol by night six years later. She

was crowned where our great Italian poets were crowned and, though her merit was no doubt great, it was, nevertheless, more tinsel than gold and not of an order to place her on a par with Petrarch or Tasso.

She was satirised most bitterly after she had received the bays, and the satirists were even more in the wrong than the profaners of the capitol, for all the pamphlets against her laid stress on the circumstance that chastity, at all events, was not one of her merits. All poetesses, from the days of Homer to our own, have sacrificed on the altar of Venus. No one would have heard of Corilla if she had not had the sense to choose her lovers from the ranks of literary men, and she would never have been crowned in Rome had she not succeeded in gaining over Prince Gonzaga Solferino, who married the pretty Mlle. Rangoni, daughter of the Roman consul, whom I knew at Marseilles and of whom I have already spoken.

Corilla should have been crowned in the light of day or not at all. This clandestine coronation was a mistake and did little honour to her or her admirers. It is a blot on the pontificate of the present Pope, for henceforth no man of genuine merit will desire the honour, once so carefully reserved for the giants of human intellect.

Two days after the coronation, Corilla and her admirers left Rome, ashamed of what they had done. The Abbé Pizzi, who had been the chief promoter of her apotheosis, was so inundated with pamphlets and satires that for some months he dared not show his face. This is a long digression and I will now return to Father Stratico, who made the time pass so pleasantly for me.

Though he was not a handsome man, he possessed the art of persuasion to perfection and succeeded in inducing me to go to Siena, where he said I should enjoy myself. He gave me a letter of introduction for the Marchioness Chigi and also one for the Abbé Chiaccheri and, as I had nothing better to do, I went to Siena by the shortest way, not caring to visit Florence.

The Abbé Chiaccheri gave me a warm welcome and promised to do all he could to amuse me and he kept his word. He introduced me himself to the Marchioness Chigi, who took me by storm as soon as she had read the letter of the Abbé Stratico—"my dear abbé," as she called him, when she saw the superscription in his handwriting.

The marchioness was still handsome, though her beauty had begun to wane; but with her, sweetness, grace and ease of manner made up for lack of youth. She knew how to make a compliment of the slightest expression and was totally devoid of any affectation of superiority.

"Sit down," she began. "So you are going to stay a week, I see, from the dear abbé's letter. That's a short time for us, but perhaps it may be too long for you. I hope the abbé has not painted us in too rosy colours."

"He told me only that I was to spend a week here and that I should find here all the charms of intellect and sensibility."

"Stratico should have condemned you to a month, without mercy."

"Why 'mercy'? What hazard do I run?"

"Of being bored to death or of leaving some small morsel of your heart in Siena."

"All that might happen in a week, but I am ready to dare the danger, for Stratico has guarded me from the first by counting on you, and from the second by counting on myself. You will receive my pure and intelligent homage. My heart will go forth from Siena as free as it came, for I have no hope of victory and defeat would make me wretched."

"Is it possible that you are amongst the despairing?"

"Yes, and to that fact I owe my happiness."

"It would be a pity for you if you found yourself mistaken."

"Not such a pity as you may think, madame. *Carpe diem* is my motto. 'Tis likewise the motto of that finished voluptuary, Horace, but I take it only because it suits me."

"The pleasure which follows desires is the best, for it is the most acute."

"True, but it cannot be calculated on and defies the philosopher. May God preserve you, madame, from finding out this painful truth by experience! The highest good lies in enjoyment, desire too often remains unsatisfied. If you have not yet found out the truth of Horace's maxim, I congratulate you."

The amiable marchioness smiled pleasantly and gave no positive answer.

Chiaccheri now opened his mouth for the first time and said that the greatest happiness he could wish us was that we should never agree. The marchioness assented, rewarding Chiaccheri with a smile, but I could not do so.

"I had rather contradict you," I said, "than renounce all hopes of pleasing you. The abbé has thrown the apple of discord between us but, if we continue as we have begun, I shall take up my abode in Siena."

The marchioness was satisfied with the sample of her wit which she had given me, and began to talk commonplaces, asking me if I would like to see company and enjoy the society of the fair sex. She promised to take me everywhere.

"Pray do not take the trouble," I replied. "I want to leave Siena with the feeling that you are the only lady to whom I have done homage and that the Abbé Chiaccheri has been my only guide."

The marchioness was flattered and asked the abbé and myself to dine with her on the following day in a delightful house she had just a short distance from town.

The older I grew, the more I became attached to the intellectual charms of women, regardless of any other attraction. With the sensualist, the contrary takes place; he becomes more materialistic in his old age. requires women well schooled in the service of Venus and flees from all mention of philosophy.

As I was leaving her, I told the abbé that, if I stayed in Siena, I would see no other woman but her, come what might, and he agreed that I was very right.

The abbé showed me all the objects of interest in Siena and introduced me to the *litterati*, who called on me in return.

The same day Chiaccheri took me to a house where the learned society assembled. It was the residence of two sisters, the elder extremely ugly and the younger very pretty; but the elder sister was accounted, and very rightly, the Corinna of the place. She asked me to give her a specimen of my skill, promising to return the compliment. I recited the first thing that came into my head, and she replied with a few lines of exquisite beauty. I complimented her, but Chiaccheri (who had been her master) guessed that I did not believe her to be the author, and proposed that we should try *bouts rimés*. The pretty sister gave out the rhymes and we all set to work. The ugly sister finished first and, when the verses came to be read, hers were pronounced the best. I was amazed and made an improvisation on her skill, which I gave her in writing. In five minutes she returned it to me; the rhymes were the same, but the turn of thought was much more elegant. I was still more surprised and took the liberty of asking her name and found her to be the famous Maria Fortuna, "a shepherdess," that is to say, a member of the Academy of Arcadians.

I had read the beautiful stanzas she had written in praise of Metastasio. I told her so and she brought me the poet's reply in manuscript. Full of admiration, I addressed myself to her alone and all her plainness vanished. I had had an agreeable conversation with the marchioness in the morning, but in the evening I was literally in ecstasy.

I kept on talking of Fortuna and asked the abbé if she could improvise in the manner of Corilla. He replied that she had wished to do so but he had disallowed it, and he easily convinced me that this improvisation would have been the ruin of her fine talent. I also agreed with him when he said that he had warned her against making impromptus too frequently, as such hasty verses are apt to sacrifice wit to rhyme.

The honour in which improvisation was held amongst the Greeks and Romans is due to the fact that Greek and Latin verse is not under the dominion of rhyme. But, as it was, the great poets seldom improvised, knowing as they did that such verses were usually feeble and commonplace.

Horace often passed a whole night searching for a vigorous and elegantly turned phrase. When he had succeeded, he wrote the words on the wall and went to sleep. The lines which cost him nothing are generally prosaic; they may easily be picked out in his epistles.

The amiable and learned Abbé Chiaccheri confessed to me that he was in love with his pupil, despite her ugliness. He added that he had never expected it when he began to teach her to make verses.

"I can easily understand that," I said, "for *sublata lucerna*, you know."

"Not at all," said he, with a laugh. "I love her for her face, since it is inseparable from my idea of her."

A Tuscan has certainly more poetic riches at his disposal than any

other Italian and the Sienese dialect is sweeter and more energetic than that of Florence, though the latter claims the title of the classic dialect on account of its purity. This purity, together with its richness and copiousness of diction, it owes to the Academy. From the great richness of Italian, we can treat a subject with far greater eloquence than a French writer; Italian abounds in synonyms, while French is lamentably deficient in this respect. Voltaire used to laugh at those who said that the French tongue could not be charged with poverty, since it has all the words one needs. He who has only what he needs is not rich. The obstinacy of the French Academy in refusing to adopt foreign words shows more pride than wisdom. This exclusiveness cannot last.

As for us, we take words from all languages and all sources, provided they suit the genius of our own language. We love to see our riches increase; we steal even from the poor, but to do so is the general characteristic of the rich.

The amiable marchioness gave us a delicious dinner in a house designed by Paladio. Chiaccheri had warned me to say nothing about the "shepherdess" Fortuna, but at dinner she told him she was sure he had taken me to her house. He had not the face to deny it and I did not conceal the pleasure I had received.

"Stratico admires Fortuna," said the marchioness, "and I confess that her writings have great merit, but it's a pity one cannot go to the house except under an incognito."

"Why not?" I asked, in some astonishment.

"What!" said she to the abbé. "You did not tell him whose house it is?"

"I did not think it necessary; her father and mother rarely show themselves."

"Well, it's of no consequence."

"But what is her father?" I asked. "The hangman, perhaps?"

"Worse! He's the *bargello* and you must see that a stranger cannot be received into good society here if he goes to such places as that."

Chiaccheri looked rather hurt and I thought it my duty to say that I would not go there again till the eve of my departure.

"I saw her sister once," said the marchioness. "She is really charmingly pretty and it's a great pity that, with her beauty and irreproachable morality, she should be condemned to marry a man of her father's class."

"I once knew a man named Coltellini," I replied. "He is the son of the *bargello* of Florence, and is a poet-in-ordinary to the Empress of Russia. I shall try to make a match between him and Fortuna's sister; he is a young man of the greatest talents."

The marchioness thought my idea an excellent one, but soon after I heard that Coltellini was dead.

The *bargello* is a cordially detested person all over Italy, if you except Modena, where the weak nobility make much of the *bargello* and do justice to his excellent table. This is a curious fact because, as a

rule, these *bargellos* are spies, liars, traitors, cheats and misanthropes, for a man despised hates his despisers.

At Siena, I was shown a Count Piccolomini, a learned and agreeable man. He had a strange whim, however, of spending six months of the year in the strictest seclusion in his own house, never going out and never seeing any company, reading and working the whole time. He certainly did his best to make up for his hibernation during the other six months.

The marchioness promised she would come to Rome in the course of the summer. She had there an intimate friend in Bianconi, who had abandoned the practice of medicine and was now the representative of the Court of Saxony.

On the eve of my departure the driver who was to take me to Rome came and asked if I would like to take a travelling companion and save myself three sequins.

"I don't want anyone."

"You are making a mistake, for she is very beautiful."

"Is she by herself?"

"No, she is with a gentleman on horseback who wishes to ride all the way to Rome."

"Then how did the girl come here?"

"On horseback, but she is tired out and cannot bear it any longer. The gentleman has offered me four sequins to take her to Rome and, as I am a poor man, I think you might let me earn the money."

"I suppose he will follow the carriage?"

"He can go as he likes; that can't make much difference to either of us."

"You say she is young and pretty."

"I have been told so, but I haven't seen her myself."

"What sort of man is her companion?"

"He's a fine man, but he can speak very little Italian."

"Has he sold the lady's horse?"

"No, it was hired. He has only one trunk, which will go behind the carriage."

"This is all very strange. I will not make up my mind until I have seen the man."

"I will tell him to wait on you."

Directly afterwards, a brisk-looking young fellow, carrying himself well enough and clad in a fancy uniform, came in. He told me the tale I had heard from the coachman, and ended by saying that he was sure I would not refuse to accommodate his wife in my carriage.

"Your wife, sir?"

I saw he was a Frenchman and I addressed him in French.

"God be praised! You can speak my native tongue. Yes, sir, she is an Englishwoman and my wife. I am sure she will be no trouble to you."

"Very well. I don't want to start later than I had arranged. Will she be ready at five o'clock?"

"Certainly."

The next morning, when I got into my carriage, I found her already there. I paid her some slight compliment and sat down beside her and we drove off.

CHAPTER 133

THIS was the fourth adventure I had had of this kind. There is nothing particularly out of the common in having a fellow traveller in one's carriage; this time, however, the affair had something decidedly romantic about it.

I was forty-five and my purse contained two hundred sequins; I still loved the fair sex, though my ardour had decreased, my caution increased and my experience ripened. I was more like a heavy father than a young lover and I limited myself to pretensions of the most modest character.

The young person beside me was pretty and gentle-looking; she was neatly though simply dressed in the English fashion, she was fair and small and her budding breast could be seen outlined beneath the fine muslin of her dress. She had all the appearances of modesty and noble birth and something of virginal innocence which inspired one with attachment and respect at the same time.

"I hope you can speak French, madame?" I began.

"Yes, and a little Italian, too."

"I congratulate myself on having you for my travelling companion."

"I think you should congratulate me."

"I heard you came to Siena on horseback."

"Yes, but I will never do such a foolish thing again."

"I think your husband would have been wise to sell his horse and buy a carriage."

"He hired it; it does not belong to him. From Rome we are going to drive to Naples."

"You like travelling?"

"Very much, but with greater comfort."

With these words, the English girl, whose white skin did not look as if it could contain a drop of blood, blushed most violently. I guessed something of her secret and begged pardon and for more than an hour I remained silent, pretending to gaze at the scenery, but in reality thinking of her, for she began to inspire me with a lively interest.

Though the position of my young companion was more than equivocal, I determined to see my way clearly before I took any decisive step and I waited patiently till we got to Bon Couvent, where we expected to dine and meet the husband. We got there at ten o'clock.

In Italy, the carriages never go faster than a walk; a man on foot can outstrip them, as they rarely exceed three miles an hour. The tedium of a journey under such circumstances is something dreadful and in the hot months one has to stop five or six hours in the middle of the day to avoid falling ill.

My coachman said he did not want to go that night beyond St.

Quirico, where there was an excellent inn, so he proposed waiting at Bon Convent till four o'clock. We had therefore six hours wherein to rest.

The English girl was astonished at not finding her husband and looked for him in all directions. I noticed her and asked the landlord what had become of him. He informed us that he had breakfasted and baited his horse and had then gone on, leaving word that he would await us at St. Quirico and order supper there. I thought it all very strange but said nothing. The poor girl begged me to excuse her husband's behaviour.

"He has given me a mark of his confidence, madame, and there is nothing to be offended at."

The landlord asked me if the *vetturino* paid my expenses and I answered in the negative, and the girl then told him to ask the *vetturino* if he was paying for her.

The man came in and, to convince the lady that providing her with meals was not in the contract, he gave her a paper, which she handed to me to read. It was signed "Comte de l'Etoile."

When she was alone with me, my young companion begged me to order dinner only for myself. I understood her delicacy, and this made her all the dearer to me.

"Madame," said I, "you must please look upon me as an old friend. I guess you have no money about you and that you wish to fast from motives of delicacy. Your husband shall repay me, if he will have it so. If I told the landlord to prepare dinner only for myself, I should be dishonouring the count, yourself possibly and myself most of all."

"I feel you are right, sir. Let dinner be served for two, then; but I cannot eat, for I feel ill and I hope you will not mind my lying on the bed for a moment."

"Pray do not let me disturb you. This is a pleasant room and they can lay the table in the next. Lie down and sleep if you can and I will order dinner to be ready two hours from now; I hope you will be feeling better by then."

I left her without giving her time to answer and went to order dinner.

I had ceased to believe the Frenchman to be the beautiful English-woman's husband and began to think I should have to fight him.

The case, I felt certain, was one of elopement and seduction, and, superstitious as usual, I was sure that my good genius had sent me in the nick of time to save her and care for her and, in short, to snatch her from the hands of her infamous deceiver.

Thus I fondled my growing passion.

I laughed at the absurd title the rascal had given himself and, when the thought struck me that he had possibly abandoned her to me altogether, I made up my mind that he deserved hanging. Nevertheless, I resolved never to leave her. I lay down on the bed and, as I built a thousand castles in the air, I fell asleep.

The landlady awoke me softly, saying that three o'clock had struck.

"Wait a moment before you bring in the dinner. I will go and see if the lady is awake."

I opened the door gently and saw she was still asleep, but, as I closed the door after me, the noise awoke her and she asked if I had dined.

"I shall not take any dinner, madame, unless you do me the honour to dine with me. You have had five hours' rest and I hope you are better."

"I will sit down with you to dinner, since you wish it."

"That makes me happy and I will order dinner to be served forth-with."

She ate little, but what little she did eat was taken with a good appetite. She was agreeably surprised to see the beefsteaks and plum pudding which I had ordered for her.

When the landlady came in, she asked her if the cook was an Englishman and, when she heard that I had given directions for the preparation of her national dishes, she seemed full of gratitude. She cheered up and congratulated me on my appetite, while I encouraged her to drink some excellent Montepulciano and Montefiascone. By dessert she was in good spirits, while I felt rather excited. She told me in Italian that she was born in London, and I thought I should have died with joy when, in reply to my question whether she knew Madame Cornelis, she replied that she had known her daughter, as they had been at school together.

"Has Sophie grown tall?"

"No, she is quite small, but she is very pretty and so clever!"

"She must now be seventeen."

"Exactly. We are of the same age."

As she said this, she blushed and lowered her eyes.

"Are you ill?"

"Not at all. I scarcely like to say it, but Sophie is the very image of you."

"Why should you hesitate to say so? It has been remarked to me before. No doubt it is a mere coincidence. How long is it since you have seen her?"

"Eighteen months; she went back to her mother's, to be married, it was said, but I don't know to whom."

"Your news interests me deeply."

The landlord brought me the bill and I saw a note of three pounds which her husband had spent on himself and his horse.

"He said you would pay," observed the landlord.

The Englishwoman blushed. I paid the bill and we went on. I was delighted to see her blushing; it proved she was not a party to her husband's proceedings.

I was burning with the desire to know how she had left London and how she had met the Frenchman and why they were going to Rome, but I did not want to trouble her by my questions and I loved her too well already to give her any pain.

We had three hours' drive before us, so I turned the conversation to Sophie, with whom she had been at school.

"Was Miss Nancy Steyne there when you left?" said I.

The reader may remember how fond I had been of this young lady, who had dined with me and whom I had covered with kisses, though she was only twelve.

My companion sighed at hearing the name of Nancy and told me that she had left.

"Was she pretty when you knew her?"

"She was a beauty, but her loveliness was a fatal gift to her. Nancy was a close friend of mine; we loved each other tenderly and perhaps our sympathy arose from the similarity of the fate in store for us. Nancy, too loving and too simple, is now, perhaps, even more unhappy than myself."

"More unhappy? What do you mean?"

"Alas!"

"Is it possible that fate has treated you harshly? Is it possible that you can be unhappy with such a letter of commendation as Nature has given you?"

"Alas! let us speak of something else."

Her countenance was suffused with emotion. I pitied her in secret and led the conversation back to Nancy.

"Tell me why you think Nancy is unhappy."

"She ran away with a young man she loved; they despaired of gaining the parents' consent to the match. Since her flight, nothing has been heard of her, so you see I have some reason to fear that she is unhappy."

"You are right. I would willingly give my life if it could be the saving of her."

"Where did you know her?"

"In my own house. She and Sophie dined with me, and her father came in at the end of the meal."

"Now I know who you are. How often have I heard Sophie talking of you! Nancy loved you as well as her father. I heard that you had gone to Russia and had fought a duel with a general in Poland. Is this true? How I wish I could tell dear Sophie all this, but I may not entertain such hopes now."

"You have heard the truth about me; but what should prevent you from writing what you like to England? I take a lively interest in you; trust in me and I promise you shall communicate with whom you please."

"I am vastly obliged to you."

With these words, she became silent and I left her to her thoughts.

At seven o'clock we arrived at St. Quirico and the so-called Comte de l'Etoile came out and welcomed his wife in the most loving fashion, kissing her before everybody, no doubt with the object of giving people to understand that she was his wife and I her father.

The girl responded to all his caresses, looking as if a load had been

lifted off her breast, and, without a word of reproach, she went upstairs with him, having apparently forgotten my existence. I set that down to love, youth and the forgetfulness natural to that early age.

I went upstairs in my turn with my portmanteau and supper was served directly, as we had to start very early the next morning if we wished to reach Radicofani before the noonday heat.

We had an excellent supper, as the count had preceded us by six hours and the landlord had had plenty of time to make his preparations. The English girl seemed as much in love with de l'Etoile as he with her and I was left completely out in the cold. I cannot describe the high spirits, the somewhat risky sallies and the outrageous humours of the young gentleman; the girl laughed with all her heart and I could not help laughing too.

I considered that I was present at a kind of comedy and I listened, observed and reflected.

"He may be merely a rich and feather-brained young officer," I said to myself, "who treats everything in this farcical manner. He won't be the first of the species I have seen. They are amusing, but frivolous and sometimes dangerous, wearing their honour lightly and too apt to carry it at the sword's point."

On this hypothesis I was ill-pleased with my position. I did not much like his manner towards me; he seemed to be making a dupe of me and behaved all the while as if he were doing me an honour. On the supposition that the Englishwoman was his wife, his treatment of me was certainly not warranted and I was not the man to play zero. I could not disguise the fact, however, that any onlooker would have pronounced me to be playing an inferior part.

There were two beds in the room where we had our supper. When the chambermaid came to put on the sheets, I told her to give me another room. The count politely begged me to sleep in the same room with them and the lady remained neutral; but I did not much care for their company and insisted on leaving them alone.

I had my portmanteau taken to my room, wished them good night and locked myself in. My friends had only one small trunk, whence I concluded that they had sent on their luggage by another way; but they did not even have the trunk brought up to their room. I went to bed tranquilly, feeling much less interested in the lady than I had been on the journey.

I was roused early in the morning and made a hasty toilette. I could hear my neighbours dressing, so I half opened my door and wished them good day without going into their room.

In a quarter of an hour, I heard the sound of a dispute in the courtyard and, on looking out, there were the Frenchman and the *vetturino* arguing hotly. The *vetturino* held the horse's bridle and the pretended count was doing his best to snatch it away from him. I guessed the bone of contention: the Frenchman had no money and the *vetturino* was asking in vain for his due. I knew that I should be drawn into

the dispute, and I was making up my mind to do my duty without mercy when the Comte de l'Etoile came in and said:*

"This blockhead does not understand what I say to him but, as he may have right on his side, I must ask you to give him two sequins. I will return you the money in Rome. By an odd chance I happen to have no money about me, but the fellow might trust me, as he has my trunk. However, he says he must be paid, so will you kindly oblige me? You shall hear more of me in Rome."

Without waiting for me to reply, the rascal went out and ran down the stairs. The *vetturino* remained in the room. I put my head out of the window and saw him leap on horseback and gallop away.

I sat down on my bed and turned the scene over in my mind, rubbing my hands gently. At last, I went off into a mad roar of laughter; it struck me as so whimsical and original an adventure.

"Laugh, too," said I to the lady, "laugh, or I will never get up from here!"

"I agree with you that it's laughable enough, but I have not the spirit to laugh."

"Well, sit down at all events."

I gave the poor devil of a *vetturino* two sequins, telling him it would do no harm to start a quarter of an hour later and that I wanted some coffee.

I was grieved to see my companion's sadness.

"I understand your grief," said I, "but you must try to overcome it. I have only one favour to ask of you and, if you refuse to grant me that, I shall be as sad as you, so we shall be rather a melancholy couple."

"What can I do for you?"

"You can tell me on your word of honour whether that extraordinary character is your husband or only your lover."

"I will tell you the simple truth: he is not my husband, but we are going to be married in Rome."

"I breathe again. He will never be your husband and so much the better for you. He has seduced you and you love him, but you will soon get over all that."

"Never, unless he deceives me."

"He has deceived you already. I am sure he has told you that he is rich, that he is a man of rank and that he will make you happy; and all that is a lie."

"How can you know all this?"

"My charming young lady, I know that in the same way as I know so many other things that man learns from experience. Your lover is a young feather-brain, a man of no worth. He might possibly marry you, but it would be only to support himself by the sale of your charms."

"He loves me; I am sure of it."

"Yes, he loves you, but not with the love of a man of honour. Without knowing my name or my character or anything about me,

he delivered you over to my tender mercies. A man of any delicacy would never abandon his loved one thus."

"He is not jealous. You know Frenchmen are not."

"A man of honour is the same in France, England, Italy and all the world over. If he loved you, would he have left you penniless in this fashion? What would you do if I were inclined to play the brutal lover? You may speak freely."

"I would defend myself."

"Very well; then I would abandon you here and what would you do then? You are pretty, you are a woman of sensibility, but many men would take but little account of your virtue. Your lover has left you to me; for all he knew, I might be the vilest wretch; but as it is, cheer up, you have nothing to fear."

"How can you think that adventurer loves you? He is a mere monster. I am sorry that what I say makes you weep, but it must be said. I even dare tell you that I have taken a great liking to you; but you may feel quite sure that I shall not ask you to give me so much as a kiss, and I will never abandon you. Before we get to Rome, I shall convince you that the 'count,' as he calls himself, not only does not love you, but is a common swindler, as well as a deceiver."

"You will convince me of that?"

"Yes, on my word of honour! Dry your eyes and let us try to make this day pass as pleasantly as yesterday. You cannot imagine how glad I feel that chance has constituted me your protector. I want you to feel assured of my friendship and, if you do not give me a little love in return, I will try to bear it patiently."

The landlord came in and brought the bill for the count and his mistress, as well as for myself. I had expected this and paid it without a word and without looking at the poor lost sheep beside me. I recollected that too strong medicines kill and do not cure and I was afraid I had said almost too much.

I longed to know her history and felt sure I should hear it before we reached Rome. We took some coffee and departed and not a word passed between us till we got to the inn at La Scala, where we got out of the carriage.

The road from La Scala to Radicofani is steep and troublesome. The *vetturino* would require an extra horse and even then would have taken four hours. I decided, therefore, to take three post-horses and not to begin the journey till ten o'clock.

"Would it not be better to go on now?" said the English girl. "It will be very hot from ten till noon."

"Yes, but the Comte de l'Etoile, whom we should be sure to meet at Radicofani, would not like to see me."

"Why not? I am sure he would."

If I had told her my reason, she would have wept anew, so in pity I spared her. I saw that she was blinded by love and could not see the true character of her lover. It would be impossible to cure her by gentle and persuasive argument; I must speak sharply; the wound

must be subjected to the actual cautery. But was virtue the cause of all this interest? Was it devotion to a young and innocent girl that made me willing to undertake so difficult and so delicate a task? Doubtless these motives counted for something, but I will not attempt to strut in borrowed plumes and must freely confess that, if she had been ugly and stupid, I would probably have left her to her fate. In short, selfishness was at the bottom of it all, so let us say no more about virtue.

My true aim was to snatch this delicate morsel from another's hand so that I might enjoy it myself. I did not confess as much to myself, for I could never bear to view my own failings calmly, but afterwards I came to the conclusion that I was acting a part throughout. Is selfishness, then, the universal motor of our actions? I am afraid it is.

I made Betty (such was her name) take a country walk with me and the scenery there is so beautiful that no poet or painter could imagine a more delicious prospect. Betty spoke Tuscan with English idioms and an English accent, but her voice was so silvery and clear that her Italian was delightful to listen to. I longed to kiss her lips as they spoke so sweetly, but I respected her and restrained myself.

We were walking along, engaged in agreeable converse, when, all at once, we heard the church bells peal out. Betty said she had never seen a Catholic service and I was glad to give her that pleasure. It was the feast day of some local saint and Betty attended a high mass with all propriety, imitating the gestures of the people, so that no one would have taken her for a Protestant. After it was over, she said she thought the Catholic rite was much more adapted to the needs of loving souls than the Anglican. She was astonished at the southern beauty of the village girls, whom she pronounced to be much handsomer than the country lasses in England. She asked me the time and I replied without thinking that I wondered she had no watch. She blushed and said the count had asked her to give him hers to leave in pawn for the horse he hired. I was sorry for what I had said, for I had put Betty, who was incapable of a lie, to great pain.

We started at ten o'clock with three horses and, as a cool wind was blowing, we had a pleasant drive, arriving at Radicofani at noon. The landlord, who was also the postmaster, asked if I would pay three pauls which the Frenchman had expended for his horse and himself, assuring the landlord that his friend would pay. For Betty's sake I said I would pay, but this was not all.

"The gentleman," added the man, "beat three of my postillions with his naked sword. One of them was wounded in the face and he has pursued his assailant and will make him pay dearly for it. The reason of the assault was that they wanted to detain him till he had paid."

"You made a mistake to allow violence to be used; he does not look like a thief and you might have taken it for granted that I would pay."

"You are wrong; I was not obliged to take anything of the sort

for granted; I have been cheated in this sort many times before. Your dinner is ready, if you want any."

Poor Betty was in despair, she observed a distressed silence. I tried to raise her spirits and make her eat a good dinner and taste the excellent muscat, of which the host had provided an enormous flask. All my efforts were in vain, so I called the *vetturino*, to tell him I wanted to start directly after dinner. This order acted on Betty like magic.

"You mean to go as far as Centino, I suppose," said the man. "We had better wait there till the heat is over."

"No, we must push on, as the lady's husband may be in need of help. The wounded postillion has followed him and, as he speaks Italian very imperfectly, there's no knowing what may happen to him."

"Very well; we will be off."

Betty looked at me with the utmost gratitude and, by way of proving it, pretended to have a good appetite. She had noticed that this was a certain way of pleasing me.

While we were at dinner, I ordered up one of the beaten postillions and heard his story. He was a frank rogue; he said he had received some blows with the flat of the sword, but he boasted of having sent a stone after the Frenchman which must have made an impression on him.

I gave him a paul and promised to make it a crown if he would go to Centino to bear witness against his comrade, and he immediately began to speak up for the count, much to Betty's amusement. He said the man's wound in the face was a mere scratch and that he had brought it on himself, as he had no business to oppose a traveller as he had done. By way of comfort, he told us that the Frenchman had only been hit by two or three stones. Betty did not find this very consoling, but I saw that the affair was more comic than tragic and would end in nothing. The postillion went off and we followed him in half an hour.

Betty was tranquil enough till we got there and heard that the count had gone on to Acquapendente with the two postillions at his heels; she seemed quite vexed. I told her all would be well, that the count knew how to defend himself; but she answered me only with a deep sigh.

I suspected that she was afraid we should have to pass the night together and that I would demand some payment for all the trouble I had taken.

"Would you like us to go on to Acquapendente?" I asked her.

At this question, her face beamed all over; she opened her arms and I embraced her. I called the *vetturino* and told him I wanted to go on to Acquapendente immediately. The fellow replied that his horses were in the stable and that he was not going to put them in harness, but that I could have post-horses if I liked.

"Very well. Get me two horses immediately."

It is my belief that, if I had liked, Betty would have given me every-

thing at that moment, for she let herself fall into my arms. I pressed her tenderly and kissed her and that was all. She seemed grateful for my self-restraint.

The horses were put in and, after I had paid the landlord also for the supper, which he swore he had prepared for us, we started.

We reached Acquapendente in three-quarters of an hour and found the madcap count in high spirits. He embraced his Dulcinea with transports and Betty seemed delighted to find him safe and sound. He told us triumphantly that he had beaten all the rascals in Radicofani and had shielded his head from the stones they threw.

"Where's the slashed postillion?" I asked.

"He is drinking to my health with his comrade; they have both begged my pardon."

"Yes," said Betty, "this gentleman gave him a crown."

"What a pity! You shouldn't have given them anything."

Before supper the Comte de l'Etoile showed us the bruises on his thighs and side; the rascal was a handsome, well built fellow. However, Betty's adoring airs irritated me, though I was consoled at the thought of the earnest I had received from her.

The next day the impudent fellow told me he would order us a good supper at Viterbo and that, of course, I would lend him a sequin to pay for his dinner at Montefiascone. So saying, he showed me in an offhand way a bill of exchange on Rome for three thousand crowns. I did not trouble to read it and gave him the sequin, though I felt sure I should never see it again.

Betty now treated me quite confidentially and I felt I might ask her almost any questions.

When we were at Montefiascone she said, "You see my lover is without money only by chance; he has a bill of exchange for a large amount."

"I believe it to be a forgery."

"You are really too cruel."

"Not at all; I only wish I were mistaken, but I am sure of the contrary. Twenty years ago I should have taken it for a good one, but now it's another thing; if the bill is a good one, why did he not negotiate it at Siena, Florence or Leghorn?"

"It may be that he had not the time; he was in such a hurry to be gone. Ah! if you knew all!"

"I want to know only what you are willing to tell me, but I warn you again that what I say is no vague suspicion, but hard fact."

"Then you persist in the idea that he does not love me."

"Nay, he loves you, but in such a fashion as to deserve hatred in return."

"How do you mean?"

"Would you not hate a man who loved you only to traffic in your charms?"

"I should be sorry for you to think that of him."

"If you wish, I will convince you this evening of what I say."

"You will oblige me, but I must have some positive proof. It would be a sore pain to me, but also a true service."

"And when you are convinced, will you cease to love him?"

"Certainly; if you prove him to be dishonest, my love will vanish away."

"You are mistaken; you will still love him, even when you have had proof positive of his wickedness. He has evidently fascinated you in a deadly manner, or you would have seen his character in its true light before this."

"All this may be true; but do you give me your proofs and leave me the care of showing that I despise him."

"I will prove my assertions this evening; but tell me how long you have known him?"

"About a month; but we have been together only five days."

"And before that time you never accorded him any favours?"

"Not a single kiss. He was always under my windows and I had reason to believe he loved me fondly."

"Oh, yes! he loves you—who would not?—but his love is not that of a man of honour, but that of an impudent profligate."

"But how can you suspect a man of whom you know nothing?"

"Would that I did not know him! I feel sure that, not being able to visit you, he got you to visit him and then persuaded you to fly with him."

"Yes, he did. He wrote me a letter which I will show you. He promises to marry me in Rome."

"And who is to answer for his constancy?"

"His love is my surety."

"Do you fear pursuit?"

"No."

"Did he take you from a father, a lover or a brother?"

"From a lover, who will not be back in Leghorn for a week or ten days."

"Where has he gone?"

"To London on business, I was under the charge of a woman whom he trusted."

"That's enough. I pity you, my poor Betty. Tell me if you love your Englishman and if he is worthy of your love."

"Alas! I loved him dearly till I saw this Frenchman, who made me unfaithful to a man I adored and who will be in despair at not finding me when he returns."

"Is he rich?"

"Not very; he is a business man and comfortably off."

"Is he young?"

"No. He is a man of your age and a thoroughly kind and honest person. He was waiting for his consumptive wife to die in order to marry me."

"Poor man! Have you presented him with a child?"

"No. I am sure God did not mean me for him, for the count has conquered me completely."

"Everyone whom love leads astray says the same thing."

"Now you have heard everything and I am glad I told you, for I am sure you are my friend."

"I will be a better friend to you, dear Betty, in the future than in the past. You will need my services and I promise not to abandon you. I love you, as I have said; but, so long as you continue to love the Frenchman, I shall ask you to consider me only as your friend."

"I accept your promise and in return I promise not to hide anything from you."

"Tell me why you have no luggage."

"I escaped on horseback, but my trunk, which is full of linen and other effects, will be in Rome two days after us. I sent it off the day before my flight and the man who received it was sent by the count."

"Then good-bye to your trunk!"

"Why, you foresee nothing but misfortune!"

"Well, dear Betty, I only hope my prophecies may not be realised. Although you escaped on horseback, I think you should have brought a cloak and a handbag with some linen."

"All that is in the small trunk; I will have it taken into my room to-night."

We reached Viterbo at seven o'clock and found the count very cheerful. In accordance with the plot I had laid against him, I began by showing myself demonstratively fond of Betty, envying the fortunate lover, praising his heroic behaviour in leaving her to me and so forth. The silly fellow proceeded to back me up in my extravagant admiration. He boasted that jealousy was utterly foreign to his character, and maintained that the true lover would accustom himself to see his mistress inspire desires in other men.

He proceeded to make a long dissertation on this theme, and I let him go on, for I was waiting till after supper to come to the conclusive point. During the meal, I made him drink and applauded his freedom from vulgar prejudices. At dessert he enlarged on the duty of reciprocity between lovers.

"Thus," he remarked, "Betty ought to procure me the enjoyment of Fanny if she has reason to think I have taken a fancy to her; and *per contra*, since I adore Betty, if I found that she loved you, I should procure her the pleasure of sleeping with you."

Betty listened to all this nonsense in silent astonishment.

"I confess, my dear count," I replied, "that, theoretically speaking, your system strikes me as sublime and calculated to bring about the return of the Golden Age; but I am afraid it would prove absurd in practice. No doubt you are a man of courage, but I am sure you would never let your mistress be enjoyed by another man. Here are twenty-five sequins. I will wager that amount that you will not allow me to sleep with your wife."

"Ha! ha! You are mistaken in me, I assure you. I'll bet fifty

sequins that I will remain in the room a calm spectator of your exploits. My dear Betty, we must punish this skeptic; go to bed with him."

"You are joking."

"Not at all; to bed with you! I shall love you all the more."

"You must be crazy, I shall do nothing of the kind."

The count took her in his arms and, caressing her in the tenderest manner, begged her to do him this favour, not so much for the twenty-five sequins, as to convince me that he was above vulgar prejudices. His caresses became rather free, but Betty repulsed him gently though firmly, saying that she would never consent and that he had already won the bet, which was the case; in fine, the poor girl besought him to kill her rather than oblige her to do a deed which she thought infamous.

Her words and the pathetic voice with which they were uttered should have shamed him, but they only put him into a furious rage. He repulsed her, calling her the vilest names and finally telling her she was a hypocrite and that he felt certain she had already granted me all a worthless girl could grant.

Betty grew pale as death and, furious in my turn, I ran for my sword. I should probably have run him through if the infamous scoundrel had not fled into the next room, where he locked himself in.

I was in despair at seeing Betty's distress, of which I had been the innocent cause, and I did my best to soothe her. She was in an alarming state. Her breath came with difficulty, her eyes seemed ready to start out of her head, her lips were bloodless and trembling and her teeth shut tight together. Everyone in the inn was asleep. I could not call for help and all I could do was to dash water in her face and speak soothing words.

At last she fell asleep and I remained beside her for more than two hours, attentive to her least movements and hoping that she would awake strengthened and refreshed.

At daybreak, I heard l'Etoile going off and I was glad of it. The people of the inn knocked at our door and then Betty awoke.

"Are you ready to go, my dear Betty?"

"I am much better, but I should like a cup of tea."

The Italians cannot make tea, so I took what she gave me and went to prepare it myself.

When I came back, I found her inhaling the fresh morning air at the window. She seemed calm and I hoped I had cured her. She drank a few cups of tea, of which beverage the English are very fond, and soon regained her good looks.

She heard some people in the room where we had supped and asked me if I had taken up the purse which I had placed on the table. I had forgotten it completely. I found my purse and a piece of paper bearing the words "Bill of Exchange for three thousand crowns." The impostor had taken it out of his pocket in making his bet and had forgotten it. It was dated at Bordeaux and drawn on a wine merchant

in Paris to l'Etoile's order, it was payable at sight and was for six months. The whole thing was utterly irregular.

I took it to Betty, who told me she knew nothing about bills, and begged me to say nothing more about that infamous fellow. She then said, in a voice of which I can give no idea, "For pity's sake, do not abandon a poor girl, more worthy of compassion than of blame!" I promised her again to have all a father's care for her and soon after we proceeded on our journey.

The poor girl fell asleep and I followed her example. We were wakened by the *vetturino*, who informed us, greatly to our astonishment, that we were at Monterosi. We had slept for six hours and had done eighteen miles.

We had to stay at Monterosi till four o'clock and we were glad of it, for we needed time for reflection.

In the first place, I asked about the wretched deceiver and was told that he had eaten a light meal, paid for it and said he was going to spend the night at La Storta. We had a good dinner and Betty, plucking up spirit, said we must consider the case of her infamous betrayer, but for the last time.

"Be a father to me," said she. "Do not advise but command; you may reckon on my obedience. I have no need to give you any further particulars, for you have guessed all except the horror with which the thought of my betrayer now inspires me. If it had not been for you, he would have plunged me into an abyss of shame and misery."

"Can you reckon on the Englishman forgiving you?"

"I think so."

"Then we must go back to Leghorn. Are you strong enough to follow this counsel? I warn you that, if you approve of it, it must be put into execution at once. Young, pretty and virtuous as you are, you need not imagine that I shall allow you to go by yourself or in the company of strangers. If you believe I love you and find me worthy of your esteem, that is sufficient reward for me. I will live with you like a father if you are not disposed to give me marks of a more lively sentiment. Be sure I will keep faith with you, for I want to redeem your opinion of men and to show you that there are men as honourable as your seducer was vile."

Betty remained for a quarter of an hour in profound silence, her head resting on her elbows and her eyes fixed on mine. She did not seem either angry or astonished but, as far as I could judge, was lost in thought. I was glad to see her reflective, for thus she would be able to give me a decided answer. At last, she said:

"You need not think, my dear friend, that my silence proceeds from irresolution. If my mind were not made up already, I should despise myself. I am wise enough at any rate to appreciate the wisdom of your generous counsels. I thank Providence that I have fallen into the hands of such a man, who will treat me as if I were his daughter."

"Then we will go back to Leghorn and start immediately."

"My only doubt is how to manage my reconciliation with Sir B—

M—. I have no doubt he will pardon me eventually but, though he is tender and good-hearted, he is delicate where a point of honour is concerned and subject to sudden fits of violence. This is what I want to avoid; for he might possibly kill me and then I should be the cause of his ruin."

"You must consider it on the way and tell me any plans you may think of."

"He is an intelligent man and it would be hopeless to endeavour to dupe him by a lie. I must make a full confession in writing without hiding a single circumstance for, if he thought he was being duped, his fury would be terrible. If you intend to write to him, do not say that you think me worthy of forgiveness, you must tell him the facts and leave him to judge for himself. He will be convinced of my repentance when he reads the letter which I shall bedew with my tears, but he must not know of my whereabouts till he has promised to forgive me. He is a slave to his word of honour and we shall live together all our days without ever hearing of this slip. I am only sorry that I have behaved so foolishly."

"You must not be offended if I ask you whether you ever gave him like cause for complaint before."

"Never."

"What is his history?"

"He lived very unhappily with his first wife and was divorced from his second for sufficient reasons. Two years ago he came to our school with Nancy's father and made my acquaintance. My father died, his creditors seized everything and I had to leave the school, much to Nancy's distress and that of the other pupils. At this point Sir B— M— took charge of me and gave me a sum which placed me beyond the reach of want for the rest of my days. I was grateful and begged him to take me with him when he told me he was leaving England. He was astonished and, as a man of honour, said he loved me too well to flatter himself that we could travel together without his entertaining more ardent feelings for me than those of a father. He thought it out of the question for me to love him save as a daughter.

"This declaration, as you may imagine, paved the way for a full agreement.

"'However you love me,' I said, 'I shall be well pleased and, if I can do anything for you, I shall be all the happier.'

"He then gave me of his own free will a written promise to marry me on the death of his wife. We started on our travels and, till my late unhappy connection, I never gave him the slightest cause for complaint."

"Dry your eyes, dear Betty; he is sure to forgive you. I have friends in Leghorn and no one shall find out that we have been acquainted. I will put you in good hands and not leave the town till I hear you are back with Sir B— M—. If he prove inexorable, I promise never to abandon you and to take you back to England if you like."

"But how can you spare the time?"

"I will tell you the truth, my dear Betty. I have nothing particular to do in Rome or anywhere else. London and Rome are alike to me."

"How can I show my gratitude to you?"

I summoned the *vetturino* and told him we must return to Viterbo. He objected but I convinced him with a couple of piastres and by agreeing to use the post-horses and spare his own animals.

We got to Viterbo by seven o'clock and asked anxiously if anyone had found a pocketbook which I pretended I had lost. I was told no such thing had been found, so I ordered supper with calmness, although bemoaning my loss. I told Betty that I acted this way in order to obviate any difficulties which the *vetturino* might make about taking us back to Siena, as he might feel it his duty to place her in the hands of her supposed husband.

I had the small trunk brought up and, after we had forced the lock, Betty took out her cloak and the few effects she had in it, and we then inspected the adventurer's properties, most likely all he possessed in the world. A few tattered shirts, two or three pairs of mended silk stockings, a pair of breeches, a hare's foot, a pot of grease and a score of little books—plays or comic operas—and lastly a packet of letters; such were the contents of the trunk.

We proceeded to read the letters and the first thing we noted was the address: "To M. l'Etoile, Actor," at Marseilles, Bordeaux, Bayonne, Montpellier, etc.

I pitied Betty. She saw herself the dupe of a common actor and her indignation and shame were great.

"We will read all this to-morrow," said I. "To-day we have something else to do."

The poor girl seemed to breathe again.

We got over supper hastily and then Betty begged me to leave her alone for a few moments, for her to change her linen and go to bed.

"If you like," said I, "I will have a bed made up for me in the next room."

"No, dear friend, ought I not love your society? What would have become of me without you?"

I went out for a few minutes and, when I returned and came to her bedside to wish her good night, she gave me such a warm embrace that I knew my hour was come.

Reader, you must take the rest for granted. I was happy and I had reason to believe that Betty was happy also.

In the morning we had just fallen asleep when the *vetturino* knocked at the door. I dressed hastily to see him.

"Listen," I said, "it is absolutely necessary for me to recover my pocketbook and I hope to find it at Acquapendente."

"Very good, sir, very good," said the rogue, a true Italian. "Pay me as if I had taken you to Rome and a sequin a day hereafter and, if you like, I will take you to England on those terms."

The *vetturino* was evidently what is called "wide-awake." I gave him his money and we made a new agreement. At seven o'clock we

stopped at Montefiascone to write to Sir B— M—, she in English and I in French.

I had already decided to lodge Betty with the Corsican Rivarola, whose good sense I had seen and who had with him a woman both beautiful and discreet.

Betty had now an air of satisfaction and assurance which I found charming. She said she was full of hope, and seemed highly amused at the thought of the figure which the actor would cut when he arrived in Rome by himself. She hoped we should come across the man in charge of her trunk, and have no difficulty in getting it back.

“L’Etoile might pursue us,” I remarked.

“He dare not do so.”

“I expect not but, if he does, I will give him a warm welcome. If he does not take himself off, I will blow his brains out.”

Before I began my letter to Sir B— M—, Betty again warned me to conceal nothing from him.

“Not even the reward you gave me?”

“Oh, yes! That is a little secret between ourselves.”

In less than three hours the letters were composed and written. Betty was satisfied with my letter, and her own, which she translated for my benefit, was a perfect masterpiece of sensibility which seemed to me certain of success.

I thought of posting from Siena, to ensure her being in a place of safety before the arrival of her lover. The only thing that troubled me was the bill of exchange left behind by l’Etoile, for, whether it were genuine or false, I felt bound to deal with it in some way but could not see how it was to be done.

We set out again after dinner, in spite of the heat, and arrived at Acquapendente in the evening and spent the night in the delights of mutual love.

As I was setting up in the morning, I saw a carriage in front of the inn, just starting for Rome. I imagined that amidst the baggage Betty’s trunk might be discovered and I told her to get up and come and see if it were there. We went down and Betty recognised the trunk she had entrusted to her seducer.

We begged the *vetturino* to restore it to us, but he was inflexible and, as he was in the right, we had to submit. The only thing he could do was to allow an embargo to be laid on the trunk at the custom house in Rome, the said embargo to last for a month, so that Betty could establish her claim to it. A notary was called and the claim properly drawn up. The *vetturino*, who seemed an honest and intelligent fellow, assured us he had received nothing else belonging to the Comte de l’Etoile, so we were convinced that the actor was a mere beggar on the lookout for pickings and that the rags in the small trunk were all he possessed. After this business had been despatched, Betty brightened up amazingly.

“Heaven,” she exclaimed, “is arranging everything. My mistake will serve as a warning to me in future, for the lesson has been a

severe one and might have been much worse if I had not had the good fortune of meeting you."

"I congratulate you," I replied, "on having cured yourself so quickly of a passion that had deprived you of your reason."

"Ah! a woman's reason is a fragile thing. I shudder when I think of that monster, but I verily believe that I should not have regained my senses if he had not called me a hypocrite and said that he was certain I had already granted you my favours. Those infamous words opened my eyes and made me see my shame. I believe I would have helped you pierce him to the heart if he had not run away. But I am glad he did, not for his sake, but for ours, for we should have been in an unpleasant position if he had been killed."

"You are right; he escaped my sword because he is destined for the rope."

"Let him look to that himself, but I am sure he will never dare show his face before you or me again."

We reached Radicofani at ten o'clock and proceeded to write postscripts to our letters to Sir B— M—.

We were sitting at the same table, Betty opposite the door and I close to it, so that anyone coming in could not have seen me without turning round.

Betty was dressed with all decency and neatness, but I had taken off my coat on account of the suffocating heat. Nevertheless, though I was in shirt sleeves, I would not have been ashamed of my attire before the most respectable woman in Italy.

All at once I heard a rapid step coming along the passage and the door was dashed open. A furious-looking man came in and, seeing Betty, cried out, "Ah! there you are!"

I did not give him time to turn round and see me but leapt upon him and seized him by the shoulders. If I had not done so, he would have shot me dead on the spot with a pistol which he held in his hand.

As I leapt upon him, I had involuntarily closed the door and as he cried, "Let me go, traitor!" Betty fell on her knees before him, exclaiming, "No, no! he is my preserver."

Sir B— M— was too mad with rage to pay any attention to her and kept on, "Let me go, traitor!"

As may be imagined, I did not pay much attention to this request so long as the loaded pistol was in his hand. In our struggles, he at last fell to the ground and I on top of him. The landlord and his people had heard the uproar and were trying to get in; but, as we had fallen against the door, they could not do so.

Betty had the presence of mind to snatch the pistol from his hand and I then let him go, calmly observing, "Sir, you are labouring under a delusion."

Again Betty threw herself on her knees, begging him to calm himself, as I was her preserver, not her betrayer.

"What do you mean by 'preserver'?" said Sir B— M—.

Betty gave him the letter, saying, "Read that."

The Englishman read the letter through without rising from the ground and, as I was certain of its effect, I opened the door and told the landlord to send his people away and to get dinner for three, as everything had been settled.

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As I fell over the Englishman, I struck my hand against a nail and the fourth finger of my left hand was bleeding as if a vein had been opened. Betty helped me to tie a handkerchief around the wound, while Sir B— M— read the letter with great attention. I was much pleased with Betty's action; it showed she was confident and sure of her lover's forgiveness.

I took up my coat and portmanteau and went into the next room to change my linen and dress for dinner. Any distress at the termination of my intrigue with Betty was amply compensated for by my joy at the happy ending of a troublesome affair, which might have proved fatal for me.

I dressed and then waited for half an hour, as I heard Betty and Sir B— M— speaking in English calmly enough and did not wish to interrupt them. At last the Englishman knocked at my door and came in, looking humble and mortified. He said he was sure I had not only saved Betty but effectually cured her of her folly.

"You must forgive my conduct, sir," said he, "for I could not guess that the man I found with her was her saviour and not her betrayer. I thank Heaven which inspired you with the idea of catching hold of me from behind, as I should certainly have killed you the moment I set eyes on you and at this moment I should be the most wretched of men. You must forgive me, sir, and become my friend."

I embraced him cordially, telling him that, if I had been in his place, I should have acted in a precisely similar manner.

We returned to the room and found Betty leaning against the bed and weeping bitterly.

The blood continuing to flow from my wound, I sent for a surgeon, who said that a vein had been opened and that a proper ligature was necessary.

Betty was still weeping, so I told Sir B— M— that in my opinion, she deserved his forgiveness.

"Forgiveness?" said he. "You may be sure I have already forgiven her and she well deserves it. Poor Betty repented directly you showed her the path she was treading, and the tears she is shedding now are tears of sorrow at her mistake. I am sure she recognises her folly and will never be guilty of such a slip again."

Emotion is infectious. Betty wept, Sir B— M— wept and I wept to keep them company. At last, Nature called a truce, and, by degrees, our sobs and tears ceased and we became calmer. Sir B— M—, who was evidently a man of the most generous character, began to laugh

and jest and his caresses had great effect in calming Betty. We had a good dinner and the choice muscat put us all in the best of spirits.

Sir B— M— said we had better rest for a day or two; he had journeyed fifteen stages in hot haste and felt in need of repose.

He told us that, on arriving at Leghorn and finding no Betty there, he had discovered that her trunk had been booked to Rome and that the officer who had shipped it had hired a horse, leaving a watch as a pledge for this. Sir B— M— recognised Betty's watch and, feeling certain that she was either on horseback with her seducer or in the wagon with her trunk, he immediately resolved to pursue.

"I provided myself with two good pistols," he added, "not with the idea of using one against her, for my first thought about her was pity and my second, forgiveness; but I determined to blow out the scoundrel's brains and I mean to do it yet. We start for Rome to-morrow."

Sir B— M—'s concluding words filled Betty with joy and I believe she would have pierced her perfidious lover to the heart if he had been brought before her at that moment.

"We shall find him at Roland's," said I.

Sir B— M— took Betty in his arms and gazed at me with an air of content, as if he would have shown me the greatness of an English heart, a greatness which more than atones for its weakness.

"I understand your purpose," I said, "but you shall not execute your plans without me. Let me have the charge of seeing that justice is done you. If you will not agree, I shall start for Rome directly, I shall get there before you and give the wretched actor warning of your approach. If you had killed him before reaching Rome, well and good; but in Rome it is different and you would have reason to repent of having indulged your righteous indignation. You don't know Rome and priestly justice. Come, give me your hand and your word to do nothing without my consent, or else I shall leave you directly."

Sir B— M— was a man of my own height but somewhat thinner and five or six years older; the reader will understand his character without my describing it. My speech must have rather astonished him, but he knew that my disposition was kindly and he could not help giving me his hand and his pledge.

"Yes, dearest," said Betty, "leave vengeance to the friend whom Heaven has sent us."

"I consent to do so, provided everything is done in concert between us."

After this we parted and, Sir B— M— being in need of rest, I went to tell the *vetturino* that we would start for Rome on the following day.

"For Rome! Then you have found your pocketbook? It seems to me, sir, that you would have been wiser not to search for it."

The worthy man, seeing my hand done up in lint, imagined I had fought a duel and indeed everybody else came to the same conclusion.

Sir B— M— had gone to bed and I spent the rest of the day in

the company of Betty, who was overflowing with gratitude. She said we must forget what had passed between us, and be the best of friends for the rest of our days without a thought of any further amorous relations. I had not much difficulty in assenting to this condition.

She burned with the desire for vengeance on the scoundrelly actor who had deceived her, but I pointed out that her duty was to moderate Sir B— M—'s passions, as, if he attempted any violence in Rome, it might prove a very serious matter for him, besides its being to the disadvantage of her reputation to have her adventure talked of.

"I promise you," I added, "to have the rogue imprisoned as soon as we reach Rome and that ought to be sufficient vengeance for you. Instead of the advantages he proposed for himself, he will receive only shame and all the misery of a prison."

Sir B— M— slept seven or eight hours and rose to find that a good deal of his rage had evaporated. He consented to abide by my arrangements if he could have the pleasure of paying the fellow a visit, as he wanted to know him. After this sensible decision and a good supper, I went to my lonely couch without any regret, for I was happy in the consciousness of having done a good action.

We started at daybreak the next morning and, when we reached Acquapendente, we resolved to post to Rome. By the post the journey took twelve hours, otherwise we should have been three days on the road.

As soon as we reached Rome, I went to the custom house and put in the document relating to Betty's trunk. The next day it was duly brought to our inn and handed over to Betty.

As Sir B— M— had placed the case in my hands, I went to the *bargello*, an important person in Rome and an expeditious officer when he sees a case clearly and feels sure that the plaintiffs do not mind spending their money. The *bargello* is rich and lives well; he has an almost free access to the cardinal-vicar, the governor and even the Holy Father himself. He gave me a private interview directly, and I told him the whole story, finally saying that all we asked was that the rogue be imprisoned and afterwards expelled from Rome.

"You see," I added, "that our demand is a very moderate one and we could get all we want by the ordinary channels of the law; but we are in a hurry and I want you to take charge of the whole affair. If you care to do so, we shall be prepared to defray legal expenses to the extent of fifty crowns."

The *bargello* asked me to give him the bill of exchange and all the effects of the adventurer, including the letters. I had the bill in my pocket and gave it to him on the spot, taking a receipt in exchange. I told him to send to the inn for the rest.

"As soon as I have made him confess the facts you allege against him," said the *bargello*, "we shall be able to do something. I have already heard that he is at Roland's and has been trying to get the Englishwoman's trunk. If you were willing to spend a hundred crowns,

instead of fifty, we could send him to the galleys for a couple of years."

"We will see about that," said I. "For the present, let us get him in prison."

He was delighted to hear that the horse was not l'Etoile's property and said that, if I liked to call at nine o'clock, he would have further news for me. I said I would come. I really had a good deal to do in Rome. I wanted to see Cardinal de Bernis in the first place, but I postponed everything for the affair of the moment.

I went back to the inn and was told by a *valet de place* whom Sir B— M— had hired that the Englishman had gone to bed.

We were in need of a carriage, so I summoned the landlord and was astonished to find myself confronted by Roland in person.

"How's this?" I said. "I thought you were still at the Piazza di Spagna."

"I gave my old house to my daughter, who married a prosperous Frenchman, while I have taken this palace, where there are some magnificent rooms."

"Has your daughter many foreigners staying at her house now?"

"Only one Frenchman, the Comte de l'Etoile, who is waiting for his equipage to come on. He has an excellent horse and I am thinking of buying it from him."

"I advise you to wait till to-morrow and to say nothing about the advice I have given you."

"Why should I wait?"

"I can't say any more just now."

This Roland was the father of the Thérèse whom I had loved nine years before and whom my brother Jean had married in 1762, a year after my departure. Roland told me that my brother was in Rome with Prince Biloselski, the Russian ambassador to the Court of Saxony.

"I understood that my brother could not come to Rome."

"He came with a safe-conduct which the Dowager Electress of Saxony obtained for him from the Holy Father. He wants his case to be re-tried and there he makes a mistake for, if it were heard a hundred times, the sentence would continue the same. No one will see him; everyone avoids him; even Mengs will have nothing to say to him."

"Mengs is here, is he? I thought he was in Madrid."

"He has leave of absence for a year, but his family remains in Spain."

After hearing all the news, which was far from pleasant to me as I did not wish to see Mengs or my brother, I went to bed, leaving orders that I was to be roused in time for dinner.

In an hour's time I was awakened by the tidings that someone was waiting to give me a note. It was one of the *bargello's* men, who had come to take over l'Etoile's effects.

At dinner I told Sir B— M— what I had done and we agreed that he should accompany me to the *bargello's* in the evening. In the afternoon, we visited some of the principal palaces and, after taking Betty

back to the inn, went to the *bargello*, who told us our man was already in prison and that it would cost very little to send him to the galleys.

"Before making up my mind, I should like to speak to him," said Sir B— M—.

"You can do so to-morrow. He confessed everything without any trouble and made a jest of it, saying he was not afraid of any consequences, as the young lady had gone with him of her own free will. I showed him the bill of exchange, but he evinced no emotion whatever. He told me he was an actor by profession, but also a man of rank. As to the horse, he said he was at perfect liberty to sell it, as the watch he had left in pledge was worth more than the beast."

I had forgotten to inform the *bargello* that the watch aforesaid belonged to Betty.

We gave the worthy official fifty crowns and supped with Betty, who had, as I have said, recovered her trunk and had been busying herself putting her things to rights. She was glad to hear that the rascal was in prison, but she did not seem to wish to pay him a visit. We went to see him in the afternoon of the next day.

The *bargello* had assigned us an advocate, who made out a document demanding payment by the prisoner of the expenses of the journey and of his arrest, together with a certain sum as compensation to the person whom he had deceived, unless he could prove his right to the title of "count" in the course of six weeks. We found l'Etoile with this document in his hand; someone was translating it for him into French.

As soon as the rascal saw me, he said with a laugh that I owed him twenty-five louis under the terms of our wager at the inn, as he had allowed Betty to sleep with me. The Englishman told him he lied; as it was he that had slept with her.

"Are you Betty's lover?" asked l'Etoile.

"Yes, and, if I had caught you with her, I should have blown out your brains, for you have deceived her doubly; you're only a beggarly actor."

"I have three thousand crowns."

"I will pay six thousand if the bill proves to be a good one. In the meanwhile, you will stay here and, if it be false, as I expect it is, you will go to the galleys."

"Very well."

"I shall speak to my counsel."

We went out and called on the advocate, for Sir B— M— had a lively desire to send the impudent rascal to the galleys. However, it could not be done, for l'Etoile said he was quite ready to give up the bill but that, while they were waiting for its confirmation, he expected Sir B— M— to pay a crown a day for his keep in prison.

Sir B— M— thought he would like to see something of Rome, since he was there; he was obliged to buy almost everything, having left his belongings behind him, while Betty was well provided for, as her trunk was of immense capacity. I went with them everywhere; it was not

exactly the life I liked, but there would be time for me to please myself after they had gone. I loved Betty, without desiring her, and I had taken a liking to the Englishman, who had an excellent heart. At first he wanted to stay a fortnight in Rome and then return to Leghorn; but his friend Lord Baltimore, who had come to Rome in the meanwhile, persuaded him to pay a short visit to Naples.

This nobleman, who had with him a very pretty Frenchwoman and two servants, said he would see to the journey and that I must join the party. I had made his acquaintance in London.

I was glad to have the opportunity of seeing Naples again. We lodged at the Crocielles at the Chiaggia, or Chiaja, as the Neapolitans call it.

The first news I heard was the death of the Duke of Matalone and the marriage of his widow with Prince Caramanica. This circumstance put an end to some of my hopes and I thought only of amusing myself with my friends, as if I had never been in Naples before. Lord Baltimore had been there several times, but his mistress, Betty and Sir B— M— were strangers and wanted to see everything. I accordingly acted as cicerone, for which part I and my lord, too, were much better qualified than the tedious and ignorant fellows who had an official right to that title.

The day after our arrival I was unpleasantly surprised to see the notorious Chevalier Goudar, whom I had known in London. He called on Lord Baltimore.

This famous *roué* had a house at Posilipo; his wife was none other than the pretty Irish girl Sara, formerly a drawer in a London tavern. The reader has already been introduced to her. Goudar knew I had met her, so he told me who she was, inviting us all to dine with him the next day.

Sara showed no surprise or confusion at the sight of me, but I was petrified. She was dressed with the utmost elegance, received company admirably, spoke Italian with perfect correctness, talked sensibly and was exquisitely beautiful; I was stupefied, the metamorphosis was so great.

In a quarter of an hour, five or six ladies of the highest rank arrived, with ten or twelve dukes, princes and marquises, to say nothing of a host of distinguished strangers.

The table was laid for thirty, but before dinner Madame Goudar seated herself at the piano and sang a few airs with the voice of a syren and with a confidence that did not astonish the other guests, as they knew her, but which astonished me extremely, for her singing was really admirable.

Goudar had worked this miracle. He had been educating her to be his wife for six or seven years. After marrying her, he had taken her to Paris, Vienna, Venice, Florence, Rome, etc., everywhere seeking fortune, but in vain. Finally he had come to Naples, where he had brought his wife into the fashion by obliging her to renounce in public the errors of the Anglican heresy. She had been received into the Catholic

Church under the auspices of the Queen of Naples. The amusing part in all this was that Sara, being an Irishwoman, had been born a Catholic and had never ceased to be one.

All the nobility, even the Court, went to see Sara, while she went nowhere, for no one invited her. This kind of thing is a characteristic of nobility all the world over.

Goudar told me all these particulars and confessed that he made his living only by gaming. Faro and *biribi* were the only pillars of his house; but they must have been strong ones, for he lived in great style.

He asked me to join with him and I did not care to refuse; my purse was fast approaching total depletion and, if it were not for this resource, I could not continue living in the style to which I had been accustomed.

Having taken this resolution, I declined returning to Rome with Betty and Sir B— M—, who wanted to repay me all I had spent on her account. I was not in a position to be ostentatious, so I accepted his generous offer.

Two months later I heard that l'Etoile had been liberated through the influence of Cardinal de Bernis and had left Rome. The next year I heard in Florence that Sir B— M— had returned to England, where no doubt he married Betty as soon as he became a widower.

As for the famous Lord Baltimore, he left Naples a few days after my friends and travelled about Italy in his usual way. Three years later he paid for his British bravado with his life. He committed the wild imprudence of traversing the Maremma in August and, having spent a single night at Piperno, he was killed by the poisonous exhalations which pervade those pestilential regions during the hot season.

I stopped at the Crocielles, as all the rich foreigners came to live there. I was thus enabled to make their acquaintance and put them in the way of losing their money at Goudar's. I did not like my task, but circumstances were too strong for me.

Five or six days after Betty had left, I chanced to meet the Abbé Gama, who had aged a good deal but was still as gay and active as ever. After we had told each other our adventures, he informed me that, as all the differences between the Holy See and the Court of Naples had been adjusted, he was going back to Rome. Before he went, however, he said he should like to present me to a lady whom he was sure I should be very glad to see again.

The first persons I thought of were Donna Leonilda or Donna Lucrezia, her mother; but what was my surprise to see Agatha, the dancer with whom I had been in love at Turin after abandoning la Corticelli! Our delight was mutual and we proceeded to tell each other the incidents of our lives since we had parted.

My tale lasted only a quarter of an hour, but Agatha's history was a long one.

She had danced only a year in Naples. An advocate had fallen in love with her and she showed me four pretty children she had given

him. The husband came in at supper-time and, as she had often talked to him about me, he rushed to embrace me as soon as he heard my name. He was an intelligent man, like most of the *paglietti* of Naples. We supped together like old friends and, the Abbé Gama going soon after supper, I stayed with them till midnight, promising to join them at dinner the next day.

Although Agatha was in the very flower of her beauty, the old fires were not rekindled in me. I was ten years older. My coolness pleased me, for I should not have liked to trouble the peace of a happy home.

After leaving Agatha, I proceeded to Goudar's, having taken a strong interest in his bank. I found a dozen gamesters round the table, but what was my surprise to recognise in the holder of the bank Count Medini!

Only three or four days before Medini had been expelled from the house of M. de Choiseul, the French ambassador; he had been caught cheating at cards. I had also my own reason to be incensed against him; as the reader may remember, we had fought a duel. On glancing at the bank, I saw that it was at its last gasp. It ought to have held six hundred ounces and there were scarcely a hundred. I was interested to the extent of a third.

On examining the face of the punter who had made these ravages, I guessed the game. It was the first time I had seen the rascal at Goudar's.

At the end of the deal, Goudar told me that this punter was a rich Frenchman who had been introduced by Medini. He told me I should not mind his winning that evening, as he would be sure to lose it all and a good deal more another time.

"I don't care who the punter is," said I, "it is not of the slightest consequence to me, as I tell you plainly that, as long as Medini is the banker, I will have nothing to do with it."

"I told Medini about it and wanted to take a third away from the bank, but he seemed offended and said he would make up any loss to you, but that he could not have the bank touched."

"Very well, but, if he does not bring me my money by to-morrow morning, there will be trouble. Indeed, the responsibility lies with you, for I have told you that, as long as Medini deals, I will have nothing to do with it."

"Of course you have a claim on me for two hundred ounces, but I hope you will be reasonable; it would be rather hard for me to lose two-thirds."

Knowing Goudar to be a greater rascal than Medini, I did not believe a word he said and waited impatiently for the end of the game. At one o'clock, it was all over. The lucky punter went off with his pockets full of gold and Medini, affecting high spirits which were very much out of place, swore his victory should cost him dear.

"Will you kindly give me my two hundred ounces," said I, "for, of course, Goudar told you I was out of it?"

"I confess myself indebted to you for that amount, since you abso-

lutely insist, but pray tell me why you refuse to be interested in the bank when I am dealing."

"Because I have no confidence in your luck."

"You must see that your words are capable of a very unpleasant interpretation."

"I can't prevent your interpreting my words as you please, but I have a right to my own opinion. I want my two hundred ounces and am quite willing to leave you any moneys you propose to make out of the conqueror of to-night. You must make your arrangements with M. Goudar. By noon to-morrow, you, M. Goudar, will bring me that sum."

"I can't hand over the money to you till the count gives it to me, for I haven't any myself."

"I am sure you will have some money by twelve o'clock to-morrow morning. Good night."

I would not listen to any of their swindling arguments and went home without the slightest doubt that they were trying to cheat me. I resolved to wash my hands of the whole gang as soon as I had gotten my money back by fair means or foul.

At nine the next morning I received a note from Medini, begging me to call on him and settle the matter. I replied that he must make his arrangements with Goudar and I begged to be excused from calling on him.

In the course of an hour he paid me a visit and exerted all his eloquence to persuade me to take a bill for two hundred ounces, payable in a week. I gave him a sharp refusal, saying that my business was with Goudar and Goudar only and that, unless I received the money by noon, I should proceed to extreme measures. Medini raised his voice and told me that my language was offensive, and forthwith I took up a pistol and placed it against his cheek, ordering him to leave the room. He turned pale and went away without a word.

At noon I went to Goudar's without my sword, but with two good pistols in my pocket. Medini was there and began by reproaching me with attempting to assassinate him in my own house. I took no notice of this but told Goudar to give me my two hundred ounces. Goudar asked Medini to give him the money.

There would undoubtedly have been a quarrel if I had not been prudent enough to leave the room, threatening Goudar with ruin if he did not send on the money directly.

Just as I was leaving the house, the fair Sara put her head out of the window and begged me to come up by the back stairs and speak to her. I begged to be excused, so she said she would come down and in a moment she stood beside me.

"You are in the right about your money," she said, "but just at present my husband has not got any; you really must wait two or three days; I will guarantee the payment."

"I am really sorry," I replied, "not to be able to oblige such a charming woman, but the only thing that will pacify me is my money

and, till I have had it, you will see me no more in your house, against which I declare war."

Thereupon she drew from her finger a diamond ring worth at least four hundred ounces and begged me to accept it as a pledge.

I took it and left her, after making my bow. She was doubtless astonished at my behaviour, for in her state of dishabille she could not have counted on my displaying such firmness.

I was very well satisfied with my victory and went to dine with the advocate, Agatha's husband. I told him the story, begging him to find someone who would give me two hundred ounces on the ring.

"I will do it myself," said he. And he gave me a receipt and two hundred ounces on the spot. He then wrote in my name a letter to Goudar, informing him that he was the depositary of the ring.

This done, I recovered my good temper.

Before dinner, Agatha took me into her boudoir and showed me all the splendid jewels I had given her when I was rich and in love.

"Now I am a rich woman," said she, "and my good fortune is all your making; so take back what you gave me. Don't be offended; I am so grateful to you and my good husband and I agreed on this plan this morning."

To take away any scruples I might have, she showed me the diamonds her husband had given her; they had belonged to his first wife and were worth a considerable sum.

My gratitude was too great for words; I could only press her hand and let my eyes speak the feelings of my heart. Just then her husband came in. It had evidently been concerted between them, for the worthy man embraced me and begged me to accede to his wife's request.

We then joined the company, which consisted of a dozen or so of their friends, but the only person who attracted my attention was a very young man, whom I set down at once as in love with Agatha. His name was Don Pascal Latilla and I could well believe that he would be successful in love, for he was intelligent, handsome and well mannered. We became friends in the course of the meal.

Amongst the ladies I was greatly pleased with one young girl. She was only fourteen but looked eighteen. Agatha told me she was studying singing, intending to go on the stage, as she was so poor.

"So pretty and yet poor?"

"Yes, for she will have all or nothing and lovers of that kind are rare in Naples."

"But she must have some lover?"

"If she has, no one has heard of him. You had better make her acquaintance and go to see her. You will soon be friends."

"What's her name?"

"Callimena. The lady who is speaking to her is her aunt and I expect they are talking about you."

We sat down to the enjoyment of a delicate and abundant meal. Agatha, I could see, was happy, and delighted to show me how happy she was. The old Abbé Gama congratulated himself on having pre-

sented me. Don Pasqual Latilla could not be jealous of the attentions paid me by his idol, for I was a stranger and they were my due, while her husband prided himself on his freedom from those vulgar prejudices to which so many Neapolitans are subject.

In the midst of all this gaiety I could not help stealing many a furtive glance towards Callimena. I addressed her again and again and she answered me politely, but so briefly as to give me no opportunity of displaying my powers in the way of persiflage.

I asked her if her name was her family name or a pseudonym.

"It is my baptismal name."

"It is Greek; but, of course, you know what it means."

"No."

"'Mad beauty,' or 'fair moon'."

"I am glad to say that I have nothing in common with my name."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"I have only one married sister, with whom you may possibly be acquainted."

"What is her name and who is her husband?"

"Her husband is a Piedmontese, but she does not live with him."

"Is she the Madame Slopis who travels with Aston?"

"Exactly."

"I can give you good news of her."

After dinner I asked Agatha how she came to know Callimena.

"My husband is her godfather."

"What is her exact age?"

"Fourteen."

"She's a simple prodigy! What loveliness!"

"Her sister is still handsomer."

"I have never seen her."

A servant came in and said M. Goudar would like to have a little private conversation with the advocate.

The advocate came back in a quarter of an hour and informed me that Goudar had given him the two hundred ounces and he had returned him the ring.

"Then that's all settled and I am very glad of it. I have certainly made an eternal enemy of him, but that doesn't trouble me much."

We began playing and Agatha made me play with Callimena, the freshness and simplicity of whose character delighted me.

I told her all I knew about her sister and promised I would write to Turin to inquire whether she were still there. I told her I loved her and that, if she would allow me, I would come to see her. Her reply was extremely satisfactory.

The next morning I went to wish her good day. She was taking a music lesson with her master. Her talents were really of a moderate order, but love made me pronounce her performance exquisite.

When the master had gone, I remained alone with her. The poor girl overwhelmed me with apologies for her dress, her wretched furniture and her inability to give me a proper breakfast.

"All that makes you more desirable in my eyes and I am only sorry I cannot offer you a fortune."

As I praised her beauty, she allowed me to kiss her ardently but stopped my further progress by giving me a kiss, as if to satisfy me. I made an effort to restrain my ardour and told her to tell me truly whether she had a lover.

"Not one."

"And have you never had one?"

"Never."

"Not even a fancy for anyone?"

"No, never."

"What! with your beauty and sensibility, is there no man in Naples who has succeeded in inspiring you with desire?"

"Not one has ever tried to do so. No one has spoken to me as you have, and that is the plain truth."

"I believe you and I see that I must make haste to leave Naples if I would not be the most unhappy of men."

"What do you mean?"

"I should love you without the hope of possessing you and thus I should be most unhappy."

"Love me then and stay. Try to make me love you. Only you must moderate your ecstasies, for I cannot love a man who cannot exercise self-restraint."

"As just now, for instance?"

"Yes. If you calm yourself, I shall think you do so for my sake and thus love will tread close on the heels of gratitude."

This was as much as to tell me that, though she did not love me, yet I had only to wait patiently, and I resolved to follow her advice. I had reached an age which knows nothing of the impatient desires of youth.

I gave her a tender embrace and, as I was getting up to go, asked her if she were in need of money.

This question made her blush and she said I had better ask her aunt, who was in the next room.

I went in and was somewhat astonished to find the aunt seated between two worthy Capuchins, who were talking small talk to her while she worked at her needle. At a little distance three young girls sat sewing.

The aunt would have risen to welcome me, but I prevented her, asked her how she did and smilingly congratulated her on her company. She smiled back, but the Capuchins sat as firm as two stocks without honouring me with as much as a glance.

I took a chair and sat down beside her. She was near her fiftieth year, though some might have doubted whether she would ever see it again; her manner was good and honest and her features bore the traces of a beauty that the rust of time had ruined.

Although I am not a prejudiced man, the presence of the two evil-smelling monks annoyed me extremely. I thought the obstinate way

in which they stayed little less than an insult. True, they were men like myself, in spite of their goats' beards and dirty frocks, and consequently were liable to the same desires as I; but for all that I found them wholly intolerable. I could not shame them without shaming the lady and they knew it; monks are adepts at such calculations.

I have travelled all over Europe, but France is the only country in which I saw a decent and respectable clergy.

At the end of a quarter of an hour I could contain myself no longer and told the aunt that I wished to say something to her in private. I thought the two satyrs would take the hint, but I counted without my host. The aunt rose, however, and took me into the next room.

I asked my question as delicately as possible and she replied, "Alas, I have only too great a need of twenty ducats (about eighty francs) to pay my rent."

I gave her the money on the spot and saw that she was very grateful, but I left her before she could express her feelings.

Here I must tell my readers (if I ever have any) of an event which took place on that same day.

As I was dining in my room by myself, I was told that a Venetian gentleman who said he knew me wished to speak to me. I ordered him to be shown in and, though his face was not wholly unknown to me, I could not recollect who he was. He was tall, thin and wretched, misery and hunger showing plainly in his every feature; his beard was long and his head shaven, his robe a dingy brown and bound about him with a coarse cord, whence hung a rosary and a dirty handkerchief. In the left hand he bore a basket and in the right a long stick; his form is still before me, but I think of him not as a humble penitent, but as a being in the last state of desperation, almost an assassin.

"Who are you?" I said at length. "I think I have seen you before and yet . . ."

"I will soon tell you my name and the story of my woes; but first give me something to eat, for I am dying of hunger. I have had nothing but bad soup for the last few days."

"Certainly; go downstairs and have your dinner and then come back to me; you can't eat and talk at the same time."

My man went down to give him his meal and I gave instructions that I was not to be left alone with him, as he terrified me.

I felt sure I ought to know him and longed to hear his story. In three-quarters of an hour he came up again, looking like someone in a high fever.

"Sit down," said I, "and speak freely."

"My name is Albergoni."

"What!"

Albergoni was a gentleman of Padua and had been one of my most intimate friends twenty-five years before. He was provided with a small fortune but an abundance of wit and had a great leaning towards pleasure and the exercise of satire. He laughed at the police and the

cheated husbands, indulged in Venus and Bacchus to excess, sacrificed to the god of pederasty and gamed incessantly. He was now hideously ugly but, when I knew him first, he was a very Antinous.

He told me the following story:

"A club of young rakes, of whom I was one, had a casino at the Zuecca; we passed many a pleasant hour there without hurting anyone. Someone imagined that these meetings were the scenes of unlawful pleasures; the engines of the law were secretly directed against us and the casino was shut up two years and we were ordered to be arrested. All escaped except myself and a man named Branzandi. We had to wait for our unjust sentence but at last it appeared. My wretched fellow was condemned to lose his head and afterwards to be burnt, while I was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment *in carcere duro*. In 1765 I was set free and went to Padua, hoping to live in peace, but my persecutors gave me no rest and I was accused of the same crime. I would not wait for the storm to burst, so I fled to Rome and two years afterward the Council of Ten condemned me to perpetual banishment.

"I might bear this if I had the wherewithal to live, but a brother-in-law of mine has possessed himself of all I have and the unjust Tribunal winks at his misdeeds. A Roman attorney made me an offer of an annuity of two pauls a day on condition I renounce all claims to my estate. I refused this iniquitous condition and left Rome to come here and turn hermit. I have followed this sorry trade for two years and can bear it no more."

"Go back to Rome; you can live on two pauls a day."

"I would rather die."

I pitied him sincerely and said that, though I was not a rich man, he was welcome to dine every day at my expense while I remained in Naples, and I gave him a sequin.

Two or three days later my man told me that the poor wretch had committed suicide.

In his room were found five numbers, which he bequeathed to Medini and myself out of gratitude for our kindness to him. These five numbers were very profitable to the Naples lottery, for everyone, myself excepted, rushed to get them. Not a single one proved a winning number, but the popular belief that numbers given by a man before he commits suicide are infallible is too deeply rooted among the Neapolitans to be destroyed by such a misadventure.

I went to see the wretched man's body and then entered a café. Someone was talking of the case and maintaining that death by strangulation must be most luxurious, as the victim always expires with a strong erection. It might be so, but the erection might also be the result of an agony of pain and, before anyone can speak dogmatically on the point, he must first have had a practical experience.

As I was leaving the café, I had the good luck to catch a handkerchief thief in the act; it was about the twentieth I had stolen from me in the month I had spent in Naples. (Such petty thieves abound

there and their skill is something amazing.) As soon as he felt himself caught, he begged me not to make any noise, swearing he would return all the handkerchiefs he had stolen from me, which, as he confessed, amounted to seven or eight.

"You have stolen more than twenty from me."

"Not I, but some of my mates. If you come with me, perhaps we shall be able to get them all back."

"Is it far off?"

"In the *Largo del Castello*. Let me go; people are looking at us"

The little rascal took me to an evil-looking tavern and showed me into a room, where a man asked me if I wanted to buy any old things. As soon as he heard I had come for my handkerchiefs, he opened a big cupboard full of handkerchiefs, amongst which I found a dozen of mine and bought them back for a trifle. A few days after, I bought several others, though I knew they were stolen.

The worthy Neapolitan dealer seemed to think me trustworthy and, three or four days before I left Naples, he told me that he could sell me, for ten or twelve thousand ducats, commodities which would fetch four times that amount in Rome or elsewhere.

"What kind of commodities are they?"

"Watches, snuffboxes, rings and jewels, which I dare not sell here."

"Aren't you afraid of being discovered?"

"Not much; I don't tell everyone of my business."

I thanked him, but I would not look at his trinkets, as I was afraid the temptation of making such a profit would be too great.

When I got back to my inn, I found some guests had arrived, of whom a few were known to me. Bartoldi had come from Dresden with two young Saxons, whose tutor he was. These young noblemen were rich and handsome and looked fond of pleasure. Bartoldi was an old friend of mine. He had played Harlequin at the King of Poland's Italian Theatre. On the death of the monarch he had been placed at the head of the opera bouffe by the dowager electress, who was passionately fond of music.

Amongst the other strangers were Miss Chudleigh, now Duchess of Kingston, a nobleman and a knight whose names I have forgotten.

The duchess recognised me at once and seemed pleased when I indicated my intention to pay my court to her. An hour afterwards Mr Hamilton came to see her and I was delighted to make his acquaintance. We all dined together. Mr. Hamilton was a genius and yet he ended by marrying a mere girl, who was clever enough to make him fall in love with her. Such a misfortune often comes to clever men in their old age. Marriage is always a folly; but, when a man marries a young woman at a time of life when his physical strength is running low, he is bound to pay dearly for his folly and, if his wife is amorous of him, she will kill him. Seven years ago I had a narrow escape myself from the same fate.

After dinner I presented the two Saxons to the duchess; they gave her news of the dowager electress, of whom she was very fond. We

then went to the play together. As chance would have it, Madame Goudar occupied the box next to ours and Hamilton amused the duchess by telling the story of the handsome Irishwoman, but Her Grace did not seem desirous of making Sara's acquaintance.

After supper the duchess arranged a game at *quinze* with the two Englishmen and the two Saxons. The stakes were small and the Saxons proved victorious. I had not taken any part in the game, but I resolved to do so the next evening.

The following day we dined magnificently with the Prince of Francavilla and in the afternoon he took us to his bath by the seashore, where we saw a wonderful sight. A priest stripped himself naked, leapt into the water and, without making the slightest movement, floated on the surface like a piece of deal. There was no trick in it and the marvel must be assigned to some special quality in his organs of breathing. After this the prince amused the duchess still more pleasantly. He made all his pages dive into the water at the same time; they were lads, fifteen to seventeen years of age, as beautiful as Cupids; and these young divers, rising almost simultaneously from the bosom of the waves, came swimming under our very eyes, displaying their strength and their charms and indulging in a thousand evolutions. They were all the sweethearts of the prince, who preferred Ganymede to Hebe.

The Englishmen asked him if he would give us the same spectacle, only substituting nymphs for the *amorini*, and he promised to do so the next day at his splendid house near Portici, where there was a marble basin in the midst of the garden.

CHAPTER 135

THE Prince of Francavilla was a rich epicurean, whose motto was *Fovet et favet*. He was in favour in Spain, but the King allowed him to live in Naples, as he was afraid of his initiating the Prince of Asturias, his brothers and perhaps the whole Court into his peculiar vices.

The next day he kept his promise and we had the pleasure of seeing the marble basin enlivened with ten or twelve beautiful girls, who swam about before us until the evening. Miss Chudleigh and two other ladies pronounced this spectacle tedious; but they had found that of the previous day delightful.

In spite of this gay company I went to see Callimena twice a day; she still made me sigh in vain. Agatha was my confidante; she would gladly have helped me attain my ends, but her dignity would not allow of her giving me any overt assistance. She promised to ask Callimena to accompany us on an excursion to Sorrento, hoping that I should succeed in my object during the night we should have to spend there.

Before Agatha had made these arrangements, Hamilton had made similar ones with the Duchess of Kingston and I succeeded in getting an invitation. I associated chiefly with the two Saxons and a charming

Abbé Guliani, with whom I afterwards became more intimately acquainted in Rome.

We left Naples at four o'clock in the morning in a felucca with twelve oars and at nine we reached Sorrento. We were fifteen in number and all were delighted with this earthly paradise.

Hamilton took us to a garden belonging to the Duke of Serra Capriola, who chanced to be there with his beautiful Piedmontese wife, who loved her husband passionately. The duke had been sent there two months before for having appeared in public in an equipage which was adjudged too magnificent. The minister Tanucci called on the King to punish this infringement of the sumptuary laws and, as the King had not yet learnt to resist his ministers, the duke and his wife were exiled to this earthly paradise. But a paradise which is a prison is no paradise at all, they were both dying of *ennui* and our arrival was balm in Gilead to them.

A certain Abbé Bettoni, whose acquaintance I had made nine years before at the late Duke of Matalone's, had come to see them and was delighted to meet me again. He was a native of Brescia, but he had chosen Sorrento as his residence. He had three thousand crowns a year and lived well, enjoying all the gifts of Bacchus, Ceres, Comus and Venus, the latter being his favourite divinity. He had only to desire in order to attain and no man could desire greater pleasures than he enjoyed at Sorrento. I was vexed to see Count Medini with him; we were enemies and gave each other the coldest of greetings.

We were twenty-two at table and enjoyed delicious fare, for in that land everything is good; the very bread is sweeter than elsewhere. We spent the afternoon inspecting the villages, which are surrounded by avenues finer than the avenues leading to the grandest castles in Europe.

Abbé Bettoni treated us to lemon, coffee, chocolate ices and some delicious cream cheese. Naples excels in these delicacies and the abbé had everything of the best. We were waited on by five or six country girls of ravishing beauty, dressed with exquisite neatness. I asked him whether that were his seraglio and he replied it might be so, but that jealousy was unknown, as I should see for myself if I cared to spend a week with him.

I envied this happy man and yet I pitied him, for he was at least twelve years older than I and I was by no means young. His pleasures could not last much longer.

In the evening we returned to the duke's and sat down to a supper composed of several kinds of fish. The air of Sorrento gives an untiring appetite and the supper soon disappeared.

After supper milady proposed a game of faro and Bettoni, knowing Medini to be a professional gamester, asked him to hold the bank. He begged to be excused, saying he had not enough money, so I consented to take his place. The cards were brought in, and I emptied my poor purse on the table. It held only four hundred ounces, but that was all I possessed.

The game began and, on Medini asking if I would allow him a share in the bank, I begged him to excuse me, on the ground that it would not be feasible as I did not care to count my money.

I went on dealing till midnight and by that time I had only forty ounces left. Everybody had won except Sir — Rosebury, who had punted in English bank notes, which I had put into my pocket without counting.

When I got to my room, I thought I had better look at the bank notes, for the depletion of my purse disquieted me. My delight may be imagined. I found I had four hundred and fifty pounds, more than double what I had lost.

I went to sleep well pleased with my day's work and resolved not to tell anyone of my good luck.

The duchess had arranged for us to start at nine and Madame de Serra Capriola begged us to take coffee with her before going.

After breakfast Medini and Bettoni came in and the former asked Hamilton whether he would mind his returning with us. Of course Hamilton could not refuse, so he came on board and at two o'clock I was back at my inn. I was astonished to be greeted in my ante-chamber by a young lady, who asked me sadly whether I remembered her. She was the eldest of the five Hanoverians, the same that had fled with the Marquis della Petina. I told her to come in and ordered dinner to be brought up.

"If you are alone," she said, "I should be glad to share your repast."
"Certainly; I will order dinner for two."

Her story was soon told. She had come to Naples with her husband, whom her mother refused to recognise. The poor wretch had sold all he possessed and two or three months after had been arrested on several charges of forgery. His poor mate had been supporting him in prison for seven years. She had heard that I was in Naples and wanted me to help her, not as the Marquis wished, by giving her money, but by using my influence with the Duchess of Kingston to make that lady take her to England with her in her service.

"Are you married to the marquis?"

"No."

"How have you been able to support him for seven years?"

"Alas . . . you can think of a hundred ways and they would all be true."

"I see."

"Can you procure me an interview with the duchess?"

"I will try, but I warn you that I shall tell her the simple truth."

"Very well."

"Come again to-morrow."

At six o'clock I went to ask Hamilton how I could exchange the English notes I had won and he gave me the money himself.

Before supper, I spoke to the duchess about the poor Hanoverian. Milady said she remembered seeing her and would like to have a talk with her before coming to any decision. I brought the poor creature

to her the next day and left them alone. The result of the interview was that the duchess took her into her service in the place of a Roman girl and the Hanoverian went to England with her. I never heard of her again, but a few days later Petina sent to beg me to come to see him in prison and I could not refuse. I found him with a young man whom I recognised as his brother, though he was very handsome and the marquis very ugly; but the distinction between beauty and ugliness is often hard to point out.

This visit proved a very tedious one, for I had to listen to a long story which did not interest me in the least. As I was going out, I was met by an official who said another prisoner wanted to speak to me.

"What's his name?"

"His name is Gaetano and he says he is a relative of yours."

My relative and Gaetano! I thought it might be the abbé.

I went up to the second story and found a score of wretched prisoners sitting on the floor, roaring an obscene song in chorus. Such gaiety is the last resource of men condemned to imprisonment in the galleys; it is Nature giving her children some relief.

One of the prisoners came up to me and greeted me as "gossip." He would have embraced me, but I stepped back. He told me his name and I recognised in him that Gaetano who had married a pretty woman under my auspices as her godfather. The reader may remember that I afterwards helped her escape from him.

"I am sorry to see you here, but what can I do for you?"

"You can pay me the hundred crowns you owe me for the goods supplied to you in Paris by me."

This was a lie, so I turned my back on him, saying I supposed imprisonment had driven him mad. As I went away, I asked an official why he had been imprisoned and was told it was for forgery and that he would have been hanged if it had not been for a legal flaw. He was sentenced to imprisonment for life. I dismissed him from my mind, but, in the afternoon, I had a visit from an advocate, who demanded a hundred crowns on Gaetano's behalf, supporting his claim by the production of an immense ledger, where my name appeared as debtor on several pages.

"Sir," said I, "the man is mad; I don't owe him anything and the evidence of this book is utterly worthless."

"You are mistaken, sir," he replied. "This ledger is good evidence and our laws deal very favourably with imprisoned creditors. I am retained for them and, if you do not settle the matter by to-morrow, I shall serve you with a summons."

I restrained my indignation and asked him politely for his name and address. He wrote it down directly, feeling quite certain that the affair was as good as settled. I called on Agatha, and her husband was much amused when I told my story. He had me sign a power of attorney, empowering him to act for me, and then advised the other advocate that all communications in the case must be made to him alone.

The *paglietti*, who abound in Naples, live only by cheating and especially by imposing on strangers.

Sir — Rosebury remained in Naples and I found myself acquainted with all the English visitors. They all lodged at the Crocielles, for the English are like a flock of sheep; they follow each other about, always go to the same place and never care to show any originality. We often arranged little trips, in which the two Saxons joined, and I found the time pass very pleasantly. Nevertheless, I should have left Naples after the fair if my love for Callimena had not detained me. I saw her every day and made her presents, but she granted me only the slightest of favours.

The fair was nearly over and Agatha was making her preparations for going to Sorrento as had been arranged. She begged her husband to invite a lady whom he had loved before marrying her, while she invited Pascal Latilla for herself and Callimena for me. There were thus three couples and the three gentlemen were to defray all expenses. Agatha's husband took the direction of everything.

A few days before the party I saw, to my surprise, Joseph, son of Madame Cornelis and brother of my dear Sophie.

"How did you come to Naples? Whom are you with?"

"I am by myself. I wanted to see Italy and my mother gave me this pleasure. I have seen Turin, Milan, Genoa, Florence, Venice and Rome; after I have done Italy, I shall see Switzerland and Germany and then return to England by way of Holland."

"How long is this expedition to take?"

"Six months."

"I suppose you will be able to give a full account of everything when you get back to London?"

"I hope to convince my mother that the money she spent was not wasted."

"How much do you think it will cost you?"

"The five hundred guineas she gave me, no more."

"Do you mean to say you are going to spend only five hundred guineas in six months? I can't believe it."

"Economy works wonders."

"I suppose so. How have you done as to letters of introduction in all these countries of which you now know so much?"

"I have no introductions. I carry an English passport and let people think that I am English."

"Aren't you afraid of getting into bad company?"

"I don't give myself the chance. I don't speak to anyone and, when people address me, I reply in monosyllables. I always strike a bargain before I eat a meal or take a lodging. I travel only in public conveyances."

"Very good. Here you will be able to economise; I will pay all your expenses and give you an excellent cicerone, one who will cost you nothing."

"I am much obliged, but I promised my mother not to accept anything from anybody."

"I think you might make an exception in my case."

"No. I have relatives in Venice and I would not take so much as a single dinner from them. When I promise, I perform."

Knowing his obstinacy, I did not insist. He was now a young man of twenty-three, of a delicate order of prettiness, and might easily have been taken for a girl in disguise if he had not allowed his whiskers to grow.

Although his grand tour seemed an extravagant project, I could not help admiring his courage and his desire to be well informed.

I asked him about his mother and my daughter and he replied to my questions without reserve. He told me that Madame Cornelis was head over ears in debt and spent about half the year in prison. She would then get out by giving fresh notes and making various arrangements with her creditors, who knew that, if they did not allow her to give her balls, they could not expect to get their money.

My daughter, I heard, was a pretty girl of seventeen, very talented and patronised by the first ladies in London. She gave concerts but had to bear a good deal from her mother. I asked him to whom she was to have been married when she was taken from boarding school. He said he had never heard of anything of the kind.

"Are you in any business?"

"No. My mother is always talking of buying a cargo and sending me with it to the Indies, but the day never seems to come and I am afraid it never will come. To buy a cargo, one must have some money and my mother has none."

In spite of his promise, I induced him to accept the services of my man, who showed him all the curiosities of Naples in the course of a week. I could not make him stay another week. He set out for Rome and wrote to me from there that he had left six shirts and a great-coat behind him. He begged me to send them on, but he forgot to give me his address. He was a hare-brained fellow and yet, with the help of two or three sound maxims, he was traversing half Europe without coming to any grief.

I had an unexpected visit from Goudar, who knew the kind of company I was keeping and wanted me to ask his wife and himself to dinner, to meet the two Saxons and my English friends.

I promised to oblige him, on the understanding that there was to be no play at my house, as I did not want to be involved in any unpleasantness. He was perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, as he felt sure his wife would attract them to his house, where, as he said, one could play without being afraid of anything.

As I was going to Sorrento the next day, I made an appointment with him for a day after my return.

The trip to Sorrento was my last day of real happiness. The advocate took us to a house where we were lodged with all possible comfort. We had four rooms; the first was occupied by Agatha and her husband,

was far from being offended. Buturlin fell in love with Sara on the spot and, a few months after I left, he got her for five hundred louis, which Goudar needed to carry out an order he had received to leave Naples in three days. This stroke came from the Queen, who had learned that the King was meeting Madame Goudar secretly at Procida. But for this discovery, M. de Buturlin would not have made so good a bargain.

After my dinner Goudar asked all the company to sup with him the next evening. The repast was a magnificent one but, when Medini sat down at the end of a long table behind a heap of gold and a pack of cards, no punters came forward. Madame Goudar tried in vain to make the gentlemen take a hand. The Englishmen and the Saxons said politely that they would be delighted to play if she or I would take the bank, but they feared the count's extraordinary fortune.

Thereupon Goudar had the impudence to ask me to deal for a fourth share.

"I will not deal for less than a half share," I replied, "though I have no confidence in my luck."

Goudar spoke to Medini, who got up, took away his share and left the place.

I had only two hundred ounces in my purse. I placed them beside Goudar's two hundred and in two hours my bank was broken and I went to console myself with my Callimena.

Finding myself penniless, I decided to yield to the pressure of Agatha's husband, who continued to beg me to take back the jewellery I had given his wife. I told Agatha I would never have consented if Fortune had been kinder to me. She told her husband and the worthy man came out of his study and embraced me as if I had just made his fortune.

I told him I would like to have the value of the jewels and the next day I found myself once more in possession of fifteen thousand francs.

From that moment I decided to go to Rome, intending to stop there eight months, but before my departure the advocate said he must give me a dinner at a casino which he had at Portici.

I had plenty of food for thought when I found myself in the house where I had made a small fortune by my trick with the mercury five-and-twenty years before.

The King was then at Portici with his Court and, our curiosity attracting us, we were witnesses of a most singular spectacle.

The King was only nineteen and loved all kinds of frolics. He conceived a desire to be tossed in a blanket! Probably few crowned heads have wished to imitate Sancho Panza in this manner. His Majesty was tossed to his heart's content; but, after his aerial journeys, he wished to laugh at those whom he had amused. He began by proposing that the Queen should take part in the game; on her replying by shrieks of laughter, His Majesty did not insist.

The old courtiers made their escape, greatly to my regret, for I should have liked to see them cutting capers in the air, especially

Prince Paul Nicander, who had been the King's tutor and had filled him with all his own prejudices.

When the King saw that his old followers had fled, he was reduced to asking young nobles present to play their part. (I was not afraid for myself, as I was unknown and not of sufficient rank to merit such an honour.)

After three or four young noblemen had been tossed, much to the amusement of the Queen and her ladies, the King cast his eyes on two young Florentine nobles who had lately arrived at Naples. They were with their tutor and all three had been laughing heartily at the disport of the King and his courtiers. The monarch came up and accosted them very pleasantly, proposing that they should take part in the game. The wretched Tuscans had been baked in a bad oven; they were undersized, ugly and humpbacked. His Majesty's proposal seemed to put them on thorns. Everybody listened for the effects of the King's eloquence; he was urging them to undress and saying that it would be unmannerly to refuse; there could be no humiliation in it, he said, as he himself had been the first to submit. The tutor felt that it would not do to give the King a refusal and told them that they must give in and thereupon the two Florentines took off their clothes.

When the company saw their figures and doleful expressions, the laughter became general. The King took one of them by the hand, observing in an encouraging manner that there would be no danger, and as a special honour he held one of the corners of the blanket himself. But, for all that, big tears rolled down the wretched young man's cheeks. After three or four visits to the ceiling and amusing everyone by the display of his long thin legs, he was released and the younger brother went to the torture smilingly, for which he was rewarded by applause.

Their tutor, suspecting that His Majesty destined him for the same fate, had slipped out and the King laughed merrily when he heard of his departure.

Such was the extraordinary spectacle we enjoyed, a spectacle in every way unique.

Don Pascal Latilla, who had been lucky enough to avoid His Majesty's notice, told us a number of pleasant anecdotes about the King; all showed him in the amiable light of a friend of mirth and an enemy to all pomp and stateliness, by which kings are hedged in generally. He assured us that no one could help liking him because he always preferred to be treated as a friend rather than a monarch.

"He is never more grieved," said Pascal, "than when his minister Tanucci shows him that he must be severe, and his greatest joy is to grant a favour."

Ferdinand had not the least tincture of letters, but, as he was a man of good sense, he honoured lettered men most highly; indeed, anyone of merit was sure of his patronage. He revered the minister Marco; he had the greatest respect for the memory of Lelio Carraffa and of the Dukes of Matalone and he had provided handsomely for

a nephew of the famous man of letters, Genovesi, in consideration of the uncle's merits.

Games of chance were forbidden. One day he surprised a number of the officers of his guard playing faro. The young men were terrified at the sight of the King and would have hidden their cards and morey.

"Don't put yourselves out," said the kindly monarch. "Take care that Tanucci doesn't catch you, but don't mind me."

His father was extremely fond of him up to the time when he was obliged to resist the paternal orders, in deference to State reasons. Ferdinand knew that, though he was the King of Spain's son, he was none the less King of the Two Sicilies and his duties as king had the prerogative over his duties as son. Some months after the suppression of the Jesuits, he wrote his father a letter, beginning:

"There are four things which astonish me very much. The first is that, though the Jesuits were said to be so rich, not a penny was found upon them at the suppression; the second is that, though the Scrivani of Naples are supposed to take no fees, yet their wealth is immense; the third is that, while all the other young couples have children sooner or later, we have none; and the fourth is that all men die at last except Tanucci, who, I believe will live on in *secula seculorum*."

The King of Spain showed this letter to all the ministers and ambassadors that they might see that his son was a clever man, and he was right, for a man who can write such a letter must be clever.

Two or three days later the Chevalier de Morosini, nephew of the procurator and sole heir of the illustrious house of Morosini, came to Naples, accompanied by his tutor Stratico, professor of mathematics at Padua and the same that had given me a letter for his brother, the Pisan professor; he stayed at the Crocielles and we were delighted to see one another again.

Morosini, a young man of nineteen, was travelling to complete his education. He had spent three years at the Turin Academy and was now under the superintendence of a man who could have introduced him to the whole range of learning, but unhappily the will was wanting in the pupil. The young Venetian loved women to excess, frequented the society of rakes and yawned in good company. He was a sworn foe to study and spent his money in a lavish manner, less from generosity than from a desire to be revenged on his uncle's economies. He complained of being still kept in tutelage; he had calculated that he could spend eight hundred sequins a month and thought his allowance of two hundred an insult. With this notion, he set himself to sow debts broadcast and only laughed at his tutor when the latter mildly reproached him for his extravagance and pointed out that, if he were saving for the present, he would be able to be all the more magnificent on his return to Venice. His uncle had made an excellent match for him; he was to marry a girl who was extremely pretty and also the heiress of the house of Grimani de Servi.

The only redeeming feature in the young man's character was that he had a mortal hatred of all kinds of gambling.

Since my bank had been broken, I had been at Goudar's, but I would not listen to his proposal that I join them again. Medini had become a sworn foe of mine. As soon as I came, he would go away, but I pretended not to notice him. He was at Goudar's when I introduced Morosini and his mentor and, thinking the young man fair prey, he became very intimate with him. When he found out that Morosini would not hear of gaming, his hatred of me increased, for he was certain I had warned the rich Venetian against him.

Morosini was much taken with Sara's charms and thought only of how he could possess her. He was still a young man, full of romantic notions, and she would have become odious in his eyes if he had guessed that she would have to be bought at a heavy price.

He told me several times that, if a woman proposed payment for her favours, his disgust would cure him of his love in a moment. As he said, and rightly, he was as good a man as Madame Goudar was a woman.

This was distinctly a good point in his character; no woman who gave her favours in exchange for presents received could hope to dupe him. Sara's maxims were diametrically opposed to his; she looked on her love as a bill of exchange.

Stratico was delighted to see him engaged in this intrigue, for the chief point in dealing with him was to keep him occupied. If he had no distractions, he took refuge in bad company or furious riding. He would sometimes ride ten or twelve stages at full gallop, utterly ruining the horses. He was only too glad to make his uncle pay for them, as he swore he was an old miser.

After I had made up my mind to leave Naples, I had a visit from Don Pascal Latilla, who brought with him the Abbé Galiani, whom I had known in Paris. It may be remembered that I had known his brother at St. Agatha's, where I had stayed with him and left him Donna Lucrezia Castelli. I told him that I had intended to visit him and asked if Lucrezia were still with him.

"She lives at Salerno," said he, "with her daughter, the Marchioness C—."

I was delighted to hear the news; if it had not been for the abbé's visit, I should never have heard what had become of these ladies.

I asked him if he knew the Marchioness C—.

"I know only the marquis," he replied. "He is old and very rich."

That was enough for me.

A couple of days afterwards, Morosini invited Sara, Goudar, two young gamesters and Medini to dinner. The latter had not yet given up hopes of cheating the chevalier in one way or another.

Towards the end of dinner it happened that Medini differed in opinion from me and expressed his views in such a peremptory manner that I remarked that a gentleman would be rather more choice in his expressions.

"Maybe," he replied, "but I am not going to learn manners from you."

I constrained myself and said nothing, but I was getting tired of his insolence and, as he might imagine that my resentment was caused by fear, I determined on disabusing him. As he was taking his coffee on the balcony overlooking the sea, I came up to him with my cup in my hand and said that I was tired of the rudeness with which he treated me in company.

"You would find me ruder still," he replied, "if we could meet without company."

"I think I could convince you of your mistake if we could have a private meeting."

"I should very much like to see you do it."

"When you see me go out, follow me and don't say a word to anyone."

"I will not fail."

I rejoined the company and, walking slowly towards Posilipo, I looked back and saw him following me and as he was a brave fellow and we both had our swords, I felt sure the thing would soon be settled.

As soon as I found myself in the open country, where we would not be interrupted, I stopped short. As he drew near, I attempted a parley, thinking we might come to a more amicable settlement; but the fellow rushed on me with his sword in one hand and his hat in the other. I lunged out at him and, instead of attempting to parry, he replied in quart. The result was that our blades were caught in each other's sleeves; but I had slit his arm, while his point had only pierced the stuff of my coat.

I put myself on guard again to go on, but I could see he was too weak to defend himself, so I said, if he liked, I would give him quarter. He made no reply, so I pressed on him, struck him to the ground and trampled on his body. He foamed with rage and said it was my turn this time but that he hoped I would give him his revenge.

"With pleasure, in Rome, and I hope the third lesson will be more effectual than the two I have already given you."

He was losing a good deal of blood, so I sheathed his sword for him and advised him to go to Goudar's house, which was close at hand, and have his wound attended to.

I went back to the Crocielles as if nothing had happened. The chevalier was making love to Sara and the rest were playing cards.

I left the company an hour afterwards without having said a word about my duel and for the last time I supped with Callimena. Six years later I saw her in Venice, displaying her beauty and her talents on the boards of St. Benedict's Theatre.

I spent a delicious night with her and at eight o'clock the next day I went off in a post-chaise without taking leave of anyone. I arrived at Salerno at two o'clock in the afternoon and, as soon as I had taken a room, I wrote a note to Donna Lucrezia Castelli at the Marquis C—'s. I asked her if I could pay her a short visit, and begged her to send a reply while I was taking my dinner.

I was sitting down to table when I had the pleasure of seeing Lucrezia herself come in. She gave a cry of delight and rushed to my arms. This excellent woman was exactly my own age, but she would have been taken for fifteen years younger. After I had told her how I had come to hear about her, I asked for news of our daughter.

"She is longing to see you, and her husband, too; he is a worthy old man and will be so glad to know you."

"How does he know of my existence?"

"Leonilda has mentioned your name a thousand times during the five years they have been married. He is aware that you gave her five thousand ducats. We shall sup together."

"Let us go directly; I cannot rest till I have seen my Leonilda and the good husband God has given her. Have they any children?"

"No, unluckily for her, as after his death the property passes to his relatives. But Leonilda will be a rich woman for all that; she will have a hundred thousand ducats of her own."

"You have never married?"

"No."

"You are as pretty as you were twenty-six years ago and, if it had not been for the Abbé Galiani, I should have left Naples without seeing you!"

I found Leonilda had developed into a perfect beauty. She was at that time twenty-three years old. Her husband's presence was no constraint upon her; she received me with open arms and put me completely at my ease.

No doubt she was my daughter but, in spite of our relationship and my advancing years, I still felt within my breast the symptoms of the tenderest passion for her.

She presented me to her husband, who suffered dreadfully from gout and could not stir from his armchair. He received me with smiling face and open arms, saying, "My dear friend, embrace me." I embraced him affectionately and in our greeting discovered that he was a brother mason. The marquis had suspected as much, but I had not; for a nobleman of sixty who could boast that he had seen the light was a *rara avis* in the domains of His Sicilian Majesty thirty years ago. I sat down beside him and we embraced again, while the ladies looked on amazed, wondering to see us so friendly to each other.

Donna Leonilda fancied we must be old friends and told her husband how delighted she was. The old man burst out laughing and Lucrezia, suspecting the truth, bit her lips and said nothing. The fair marchioness reserved her curiosity for another season.

The marquis had seen the whole of Europe. He had not thought of marrying until the death of his father, who had attained the age of ninety. Finding himself in the enjoyment of thirty thousand ducats a year, he imagined that he might yet have children, in spite of his advanced age. He saw Leonilda and in a few days made her his wife, giving her a dowry of a hundred thousand ducats. Donna Lucrezia came

to live with her daughter. Though the marquis lived magnificently, he found it difficult to spend more than half his income.

He lodged all his relatives in his immense palace; there were three families in all and each lived apart. Although they were comfortably off, they were awaiting with impatience the death of the head of the family, as they would then share his riches. The marquis had married only in the hope of having an heir and these hopes he could no longer entertain. However, he loved his wife none the less, while she made him happy by her charming disposition.

The marquis was a man of liberal views, like his wife, but this was a great secret, as "free thought" was not appreciated in Salerno. Consequently any outsider would have taken the household for a truly Christian one and the marquis took care to adopt in appearance all the prejudices of his fellow countrymen.

Donna Leonilda told me all this three hours after, as we walked in a beautiful garden, where her husband had sent us after a long conversation on subjects which could not have been of any interest to the ladies—nevertheless, they had not left us for a moment, so delighted were they to find that the marquis had met a congenial spirit. About six o'clock the marquis begged Donna Lucrezia to take me to the garden and amuse me till the evening. His wife he asked to stay, as he had something to say to her.

It was in the middle of August and the heat was great, but the ground floor room where we were was cooled by a delicious breeze. I looked out of the window and noticed that the leaves on the trees were still and no wind was blowing and I could not help saying to the marquis that I was astonished to find his room as cool as spring in the heats of summer.

"Your sweetheart will explain it to you," said he.

We went through several apartments and at last reached a closet in one corner of which was a square opening. From it rushed a cold and even violent wind. From the opening, one could go down a stone staircase of at least a hundred steps and at the bottom was a grotto, where was the source of a stream of water, as cold as ice. Donna Lucrezia told me it would be a great risk to go down the steps without excessively warm clothing.

I have never cared to run risks of this kind. Lord Baltimore, on the other hand, would have laughed at the danger and gone, maybe, to his death. I told my old sweetheart that I could imagine the thing very well from the description and that I had no curiosity to see whether my imagination was correct.

Lucrezia told me I was very prudent, and took me to the garden. It was large and separated from the garden common to the three other families who inhabited the castle. Every flower that can be imagined was there; fountains threw their glittering sprays and grottoes afforded a pleasing shade from the sun. The alleys of this terrestrial paradise were formed of vines and the bunches of grapes seemed almost as numerous as the leaves. Lucrezia enjoyed my surprise and

I told her I was not astonished at being more moved by this than by the vines of Tivoli and Frascati. The immense rather dazzles the eyes than moves the heart.

She told me that her daughter was happy and that the marquis was an excellent man and in perfect health, except for the gout. His great grief was that he had no children. Amongst his dozens of nephews there was not one worthy of succeeding to the title.

"They are all ugly, awkward lads, more like peasants than noblemen; all their education has been given them by a pack of ignorant priests and so it is not to be wondered that the marquis does not care for them much."

"But is Leonilda really happy?"

"She is, though her husband cannot be quite so ardent as she would like at her age."

"He doesn't seem to me to be a very jealous man."

"He is entirely free from jealousy and, if Leonilda should take a lover, I am sure he would be his best friend"

"Is he in a position to be absolutely certain that, if she gives him a child, he cannot be its father?"

"No, but there seems no likelihood of his ardour having any happy results. There was some ground for hope in the first six months of the marriage, but since then he has had the gout so badly that there seems reason to fear his ecstasies might have a fatal termination. Sometimes he wants to approach her, but she dare not let him and this pains her very much."

I was struck with a lively sense of Lucrezia's merits and was just revealing to her the sentiments which she had reawakened in my breast when the marchioness appeared in the garden followed by a page and a young lady.

I affected great reverence as she came up to us and, as if we had given each other the word, she answered me in a tone of ceremonious politeness.

"I have come on an affair of the highest importance," she said, "and, if I fail, I shall forever lose the reputation of a diplomatist."

"Who is the other diplomatist with whom you are afraid of failing?"

" 'Tis yourself."

"Then your battle is over, for I consent before I know what you ask. I make a reserve on only one point."

"So much the worse, as that may turn out to be just what I want you to do. Tell me what it is."

"I was going to Rome when the Abbé Galiani told me that Donna Lucrezia was here with you."

"And can a short delay interfere with your happiness? Are you not your own master?"

"Smile on me once more; your desires are orders which must be obeyed. I have always been my own master, but I cease to be so from this moment, since I am your most humble servant."

"Very well. Then I command you to come and spend a few days

with us at an estate we have at a short distance from here. My husband will have himself transported there. You will allow me to send to the inn for your luggage?"

"Here, sweet marchioness, is the key of my room. Happy the mortal whom you deign to command."

Leonilda gave the key to the page, a pretty boy, and told him to see that all my belongings were carefully taken to the castle.

Her lady-in-waiting was very fair. I said so to Leonilda in French, not knowing that the young lady understood the language, but she smiled and told her mistress that we were old acquaintances

"When had I the pleasure of knowing you, mademoiselle?"

"Nine years ago. You often spoke to me and teased me."

"Where, may I ask?"

"At the Duchess of Matalone's."

"That may be and I think I do begin to remember, but I really cannot recollect having teased you."

The marchioness and her mother were highly amused at this conversation and pressed the girl to say how I had teased her. She confined herself, however, to saying that I had played tricks on her. I thought I remembered having stolen a few kisses, but I left the ladies to think what they liked.

I was a great student of the human heart and felt that these reproaches of Anastasia's (such was her name) were really advances, but unskilfully made for, if she had wanted more of me, she should have held her peace and bided her time.

"It strikes me," said I, "that you were much smaller in those days."

"Yes, I was only twelve or thirteen. You have changed also."

"Yes, I have aged."

We began talking about the late Duke of Matalone and Anastasia left us. We sat down in a charming grotto and began styling each other "papa" and "daughter," and allowing ourselves liberties which threatened to lead to danger. The marchioness tried to calm my transports by talking of her good husband. Donna Lucrezia remarked our mutual emotion as I held Leonilda in my arms, and warned us to be careful. She then left us, to walk in a different part of the garden.

Her words had the contrary effect to what was intended. . . .

We remained motionless, looking into one another's eyes—in mute astonishment, as we confessed afterwards, to find neither guilt nor repentance in our breasts.

The marchioness, sitting close to me, called me her "dear husband," while I called her my "dear wife."

The new bond between us was confirmed by affectionate kisses. We were absorbed and silent and Lucrezia was delighted to find us so calm when she returned.

We had no need to warn each other to observe secrecy. Donna Lucrezia was devoid of prejudice, but there was no need to give her a piece of useless information. We felt certain she had left us alone so as not to be a witness of what we were going to do.

After some further conversation we went back to the palace with Anastasia, whom we found in the alley by herself.

The marquis received his wife with joy, congratulating her on the success of her negotiations. He thanked me for my compliance and assured me I should have a comfortable apartment in his country house.

"I suppose you will not mind having our friend for a neighbour?" he said to Lucrezia.

"No," said she, "but we will be discreet, for the flower of our lives has withered."

"I shall believe as much of that as I please."

The worthy man dearly loved a joke.

The long table was laid for five and, as soon as dinner was served, an old priest came in and sat down. He spoke to nobody and nobody spoke to him.

The pretty page stood behind the marchioness and we were waited on by ten or twelve servants. I had had only a little soup at dinner, so I ate like an ogre, for I was very hungry and the marquis's French cook was a thorough artist. The marquis exclaimed with delight as I devoured one dish after another. He told me that the only fault in his wife was that she was a very poor eater, like her mother. At dessert the wine began to take effect and our conversation, which was conducted in French, became somewhat free. The old priest took no notice, as he understood only Italian, and he finally left us, after saying the *Agimus*.

The marquis told me that this ecclesiastic had been a confessor in the palace for the last twenty years but had never confessed anybody. He warned me to take care what I said before him if I spoke Italian, but he did not know a word of French.

Mirth was the order of the day and I kept the company at table till an hour after midnight.

Before we parted for the night, the marquis told me that we would start in the afternoon and that he would arrive an hour before us. He assured his wife he was quite well and that he hoped to convince her I had made him ten years younger. Leonilda embraced him tenderly, begging him to be careful of his health.

"Yes, yes," he said, "but get ready to receive me."

I wished them good night and a little marquis nine months from date.

"Draw the bill," said he to me, "and to-morrow I will accept it."

"I promise you," said Leonilda, "to do my best to ensure your meeting your obligations."

Donna Lucrezia took me to my room, where she handed me over to the charge of an imposing-looking servant and wished me good night.

I slept for eight hours in a most comfortable bed and, when I was dressed, Lucrezia took me to breakfast with the marchioness, who was at her toilette.

"Do you think I shall draw my bill at nine months?" said I.

"It will very probably be met," said she.

"Really?"

"Yes, really, and it will be to you that my husband will owe the happiness he has so long desired. He told me so when he left me an hour ago."

"I shall be delighted to add to your mutual happiness." She looked so fresh and happy that I longed to kiss her but was obliged to restrain myself, as she was surrounded by her pretty maids. The better to throw any spies off the scent, I began to make love to Anastasia, and Leonilda pretended to encourage me. I feigned a passionate desire, and could see that I should not have much trouble in gaining my suit. I saw I would have to be careful if I did not want to be taken at my word; I could not bear such a surfeit of pleasures.

We went to breakfast with the marquis, who was delighted to see us. He was quite well except for the gout, which prevented his walking.

After breakfast we heard mass and I saw about twenty servants in the chapel. After the service I kept the marquis company till dinner-time. He said I was very good to sacrifice the company of the ladies for his sake.

After dinner we set out for his country house, I in a carriage with the two ladies and the marquis in a litter borne by two mules. In an hour and a half we arrived at his fine and well situated castle.

The first thing the marchioness did was to take me into the garden.

We agreed that I should go to her room only to court Anastasia, as it was necessary to avoid the slightest suspicion. This fancy of mine for his wife's maid amused the marquis, for his wife kept him well posted on the progress of our intrigue.

Donna Lucrezia approved of the arrangement, as she did not want the marquis to think that I had come to Salerno only for her sake. My apartments were next to Leonilda's but, before I could get into her room, I would have to pass through that occupied by Anastasia, who slept with another maid, still prettier than herself.

The marquis arrived an hour later and said he would get his people to carry him in an armchair round the gardens, so that he might point out their beauties to me. After supper he felt tired and went to bed, leaving me to entertain the ladies. After a few moments' conversation, I led the marchioness to her room, and she said I had better go to my own apartment through the maids' room, telling Anastasia to show me the way. Politeness obliged me to show myself appreciative of such a favour and I remarked to Anastasia that I hoped she would not be so harsh as to lock her door upon me.

"I shall lock my door," said she, "because it is my duty to do so. This room is my mistress's ante-room and my companion would probably make some remark if I left the door open, contrary to my usual custom."

"Your reasons are too good for me to overcome, but will you not sit down beside me for a few minutes and help me to recollect how I used to tease you?"

"I don't want you to recollect anything about it; please let me go."

"You must please yourself," said I. And, after embracing her and giving her a kiss, I wished her good night.

My servant came in as she went out and I told him I would sleep by myself in future.

The next day, the marchioness laughingly repeated the whole of my conversation with Anastasia, who had withheld nothing.

"I applauded her virtuous resistance but said she might safely assist at your toilette every evening."

Leonilda gave the marquis a full account of my talk with Anastasia. The old man thought I was really in love with her and he had her in to supper for my sake, so I was in common decency bound to play the lover. Anastasia was highly pleased at my preferring her to her charming mistress and at the latter's complaisance towards our love-making.

The marquis, in his turn, was equally pleased, as he thought the intrigue would make me stay longer at his house.

In the evening Anastasia accompanied me to my room with a candle and, seeing that I had no valet, insisted on doing my hair. She felt flattered at my not presuming to go to bed in her presence and she kept me company for an hour and, as I was not really amorous of her, I had no difficulty in playing the part of the timid lover. When she wished me good night, she was delighted to find my kisses as affectionate, but not so daring, as those of the night before.

The marchioness said the next morning that, if the recital she had heard were true, she was afraid Anastasia's company wearied me, as she very well knew that, when I really loved, I cast timidity to the winds.

"No, she doesn't weary me at all; she is pretty and amusing. But how can you imagine that I really love her when you know very well that the whole affair is only designed to cast dust in everyone's eyes?"

"Anastasia fully believes that you adore her and, indeed, I am not sorry that you should give her a little taste of gallantry."

"If I can persuade her to leave the door open, I can easily visit you, for she will not imagine for a moment that, after leaving her, I go to your room instead of my own."

"Take care how you set about it."

"I will see what I can do this evening."

The marquis and Lucrezia had not the slightest doubt that Anastasia spent every night with me, and they were delighted at the idea. The whole of the day I devoted to the worthy marquis, who said my company made him happy. It was no sacrifice on my part, for I liked his principles and his way of thinking.

On the occasion of my third supper with Anastasia, I was more tender than ever and she was very much astonished to find when I got to my room that I had cooled down.

"I am glad to see you so calm," said she. "You quite frightened me at supper."

"The reason is that I know you think yourself in danger when you are alone with me."

"Not at all; you are much more discreet than you were nine years ago."

"What folly did I commit then?"

"No folly, but you did not respect my childhood."

"I only gave you a few caresses, for which I am now sorry, as you are frightened of me and persist in locking your door."

"I don't mistrust you, but I have told you my reasons for locking the door. I think you must mistrust me, as you won't go to bed while I am in the room."

"You must think me very presumptuous. I will go to bed, but you must not leave me without giving me a kiss."

"I promise to do so."

I went to bed and Anastasia spent half an hour beside me. I had a good deal of difficulty controlling myself but I was afraid of her telling the marchioness everything.

As she left me, she gave me such a kind embrace that I could bear it no longer. She then went away and I shall not say whether my behaviour had irritated or pleased her.

The next day I was curious to know how much she had told the marchioness, and, on hearing nothing of the principal fact, I felt certain she would not lock her door that evening.

When the evening came, I defied her to show the same confidence in me as I had shown in her. She replied that she would do so with pleasure if I would blow out my candle and promise not to put my hand on her. I easily gave her the required promise, for I meant to keep myself fresh for Leonilda.

I undressed hastily, followed her with bare feet and lay down beside her. Wrapping herself in her long nightgown, she took my hands and held them, to which I offered no resistance. Afraid of awaking her bed-fellow, we kept perfect silence. Our lips, however, gave themselves free course. The half hour I passed beside her seemed extremely long to me, but it must have been delicious to her, as giving her the idea that she could control me as she liked.

When I left her, after we had shared an ecstatic embrace, I returned to my room, leaving the door open. As soon as I had reason to suppose that she was asleep, I returned and passed through her room to Leonilda's. Leonilda was expecting me but did not know of my presence till I notified her with a kiss.

I told her of my adventure with Anastasia, and then our exploits began again, and I did not leave her till I had spent two most delicious hours. We agreed that they should not be the last and I returned to my room on tiptoe, as I had come.

I did not get up till noon, and the marquis and his wife jested with me at dinner on the subject of my late rising. At supper it was Anastasia's turn and she seemed to enjoy the situation. She told me in the evening that she would not lock her door, but that I must not

come into her room, as it was dangerous. It would be much better, she said, for us to talk in my room, where there would be no need of putting out the light. She added that I had better go to bed, as then she would feel certain she was not tiring me in any way.

I could not say "no," but I flattered myself I would hold myself in reserve for Leonilda.

I "reckoned without my host," as the proverb goes.

Anastasia left me while I was asleep and, when I awoke, I found myself in the somewhat ridiculous position of being obliged to make a full confession to the marchioness as to why I had failed in my duties to her. When I told her my tale, she began to laugh and agreed that further visits were out of the question. We made up our minds and for the remainder of my visit our amorous meetings took place only in the summer-houses in the garden.

I had to receive Anastasia every night and, when I left for Rome and did not take her with me, she considered me a traitor.

The worthy marquis gave me a great surprise on the eve of my departure. We were alone together and he began by saying that the Duke of Matalone had told him the reason which had prevented me from marrying Leonilda and that he had always admired my generosity in making her a present of five thousand ducats, though I was far from rich.

"Those five thousand ducats," he added, "with seven thousand from the duke, composed her dower and I have added a hundred thousand, so that she is sure of a comfortable living, even if I die without a successor. Now, I want you to take back the five thousand ducats you gave her, and she herself is as desirous of your doing so as I am. She did not like to ask you herself; she is too delicate."

"Well, I would have refused Leonilda if she had asked me, but I accept this as a mark of your friendship. A refusal would bear witness to nothing but foolish pride, as I am a poor man. I should like Leonilda and her mother to be present when you give me the money."

"Embrace me; we will do our business after dinner."

Naples has always been a temple of Fortune to me, but, if I went there now, I should starve. Fortune flouts old age.

Leonilda and Lucrezia wept with joy when the good marquis gave me the five thousand ducats in bank notes and presented his mother-in-law with an equal sum in token of his gratitude to her for having introduced me to him. The marquis was discreet enough not to reveal his chief reason. Donna Lucrezia did not know that the Duke of Matalone had told him that Leonilda was my daughter.

An excess of gratitude lessened my high spirits for the rest of the way and Anastasia did not spend a very lively night with me.

I went off at eight o'clock the next morning. I was sad and the whole house was in tears.

I promised that I would write to the marquis from Rome and I reached Naples at eleven o'clock. I went to see Agatha, who was astonished at my appearance, as she had thought I was in Rome. Her

husband welcomed me in the most friendly manner, although he was suffering a great deal.

I said I would dine with them and start directly afterwards, and I asked the advocate to get me a bill on Rome for five thousand ducats in exchange for the bank notes I gave him. Agatha saw that my mind was made up and, without endeavouring to persuade me to stay, she went in search of Callimena. She, too, had thought I was in Rome, and was in an ecstasy of delight to see me again.

My sudden disappearance and my unexpected return were the mystery of the day, but I did not satisfy anyone's curiosity.

I left them at three o'clock and stopped at Montecasino, which I had never seen. I congratulated myself on my idea, for I met there Prince Xavier de Saxe, who was travelling under the name of Comte de Lusace with Madame Spinucci, a lady of Fermo with whom he had contracted a semi-clandestine marriage. He had been waiting for three days to hear from the Pope, for, by Saint Benedict's rule, women are not allowed in monasteries and, as Madame Spinucci did not wish to comply with the rule, her husband had been obliged to apply for a dispensation to the Holy Father.

I slept at Montecasino, after having seen the curiosities of the place, and went on to Rome and put up with Roland's daughter in the Piazza di Spagna.

CHAPTER 136

I HAD made up my mind to spend a quiet six months in Rome and the day after my arrival I took a pleasant suite of rooms opposite the Spanish ambassador, whose name was d'Aspura. It happened to be the same rooms as had been occupied twenty-seven years before by the teacher of languages to whom I had gone for lessons while I was with Cardinal Acquaviva. The landlady was the wife of a cook, who slept with his better half only once a week. The woman had a daughter sixteen or seventeen years old, who would have been very pretty if smallpox had not deprived her of one eye. They had provided her with an ill-made artificial eye of a wrong size and a bad colour, which gave a very unpleasant expression to her face. Margarita, as she was called, made no impression on me, but I made her a present which she valued very highly. There was an English oculist named Taylor in Rome at that time and I got him to make an eye of the right size and colour. This made Margarita imagine that I had fallen in love with her, and the mother, a pious woman, was in some trouble as to whether my intentions were strictly virtuous.

I made arrangements with the mother to supply me with a good dinner and supper, without any luxury. I had three thousand sequins and had made up my mind to live in a quiet and respectable manner.

The next day I found letters for me in several post-offices and the banker Belloni, who had known me for several years, had already been advised of my bill of exchange. My good friend Dandolo sent me two

letters of introduction, one which was addressed to M. Erizzo, the Venetian ambassador to Paris. This letter pleased me greatly. The other was addressed to the Duchess of Fiano, from her brother M. Zuliani.

I saw that I was in a fair way to be slipped into all the best houses in Rome, and I promised myself the pleasure of an early visit to Cardinal de Bernis.

I did not hire either a carriage or a servant. In Rome both these articles are procurable at a moment's notice.

My first call was on the Duchess of Fiano. She was an ugly woman and, though she was really very good-natured, she assumed the character of being malicious, so as to obtain some consideration.

Her husband, who bore the name of Ottoboni, had married her only to obtain an heir, but the poor devil turned out to be what the Romans call *babilano*—he was impotent. The duchess told me as much on the occasion of my third visit. She did not give me the information in a complaining tone or as if she were fain to be consoled, but merely to defy her confessor, who had threatened her with excommunication if she went on telling people about her husband's condition or if she tried to cure him of it.

The duchess gave a little supper every evening to her select circle of friends. I was not admitted to these reunions until a week or ten days later, by which time I had made myself generally popular. The duke did not care for company and supped apart.

The Prince of Santa-Croce was the duchess's *cavaliere servente* and the princess was served by Cardinal de Bernis. The princess was a daughter of the Marquis Falconieri and was young, pretty, lively and intended by nature for a life of pleasure. However, her pride at possessing the cardinal was so great that she did not give any hope to other competitors for her favour.

The prince was a fine man, of distinguished manners and great capability, which he employed in business speculations, being of opinion, and rightly, that it was no shame for a nobleman to increase his fortune by the exercise of his intelligence. He was a careful man and had attached himself to the duchess because she cost him nothing and he ran no risk of falling in love with her.

Two or three weeks after my arrival he heard me complaining of the obstacles to research in the Roman libraries and he offered to give me an introduction to the Superior of the Jesuits. I accepted the offer and was made free of the library; I could not only go and read when I liked, but I could, on writing my name down, take books home with me. The keepers of the library always brought me candles when it grew dark, and their politeness was so great that they gave me the key of a side door, so that I could slip in and out as I pleased.

The Jesuits were always the most polite of the regular clergy, or, indeed, I may say the only polite men amongst them; but during the crisis in which they were then involved, they were simply cringing.

The King of Spain had called for the suppression of the order and the Pope had promised that it should be done; but the Jesuits did not

think such a blow could ever be struck, and they felt almost secure. They did not think the Pope's power was superhuman so far as they were concerned. They even intimated to him by indirect channels that his authority did not extend to the suppression of the order; but they were mistaken. The sovereign pontiff delayed the signing of the bull, but his hesitation proceeded from the fact that, in signing it, he feared lest he should be signing his own sentence of death. Accordingly, he put it off till he found that his honour was threatened. The King of Spain, the most obstinate tyrant in Europe, wrote to him with his own hand, telling him that, if he did not suppress the order, he would publish in printed form and in all the languages of Europe the letters the Pope had written him when he was a cardinal, promising to do so when he became Pope. It was on the strength of these letters that Ganganelli had been elected.

Another man would have taken refuge in casuistry and told the King that it was not for a pope to be bound to a cardinal's promises, in which contention he would have been supported by the Jesuits. However, in his heart Ganganelli had no liking for the Jesuits. He was a Franciscan and not a gentleman by birth. He had not a strong enough intellect to defy the King and all his threats or to bear the shame of being exhibited to the whole world as an ambitious and unscrupulous man.

I am amused when people tell me that Ganganelli poisoned himself by taking so many antidotes. It is true that, having reason, and good reason, to dread poison, he made use of antidotes which, with his ignorance of science, may have injured his health; but I am morally certain that he died of poison given by other hands than his own. My reasons for this opinion are as follows:

In the year of which I am speaking (the third of the pontificate of Clement XIV) a woman of Viterbo was put in prison on the charge of making predictions. She obscurely prophesied the suppression of the Jesuits, without giving any indication of the time; but she said very clearly that the Company would be destroyed by a pope who would reign only five years, three months and three days—that is, as long as Sixtus V, not a day more and not a day less.

Everybody treated the prediction with contempt, as the product of a brain-sick woman. She was shut up and quite forgotten.

I ask my readers to give a dispassionate judgment and say whether they have any doubt as to the poisoning of Ganganelli when they hear that his death verified the prophecy.

In a case like this, moral certainly assumes the force of scientific certainty. The spirit which inspired the Pythia of Viterbo took its measures to inform the world that, if the Jesuits were forced to submit to being suppressed, they were not so weak as to forego a fearful vengeance. The Jesuit who cut short Ganganelli's days might certainly have poisoned him before the bull was signed, but the fact was that they could not bring themselves to believe it possible till it took place. It is clear that, if the Pope had not suppressed the Jesuits, they would not have poisoned him and here again the prophecy could not be taxed with

falsity. We may note that Clement XIV, like Sixtus V, was a Franciscan and both were of low birth. It is also noteworthy that, after the Pope's death, the prophetess was liberated and, though her prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter, all the authorities persisted in saying that His Holiness had died from his excessive use of antidotes.

It seems to me that any impartial judge will scout the idea of Gan-ganelli having killed himself to verify the woman of Viterbo's prediction. If you say it was a mere coincidence, of course I cannot absolutely deny your position, for it may have been chance; but my thoughts on the subject will remain unchanged.

The poisoning was the last sign the Jesuits gave of their power. It was a crime because it was committed after the event, whereas, if it had been done before the suppression of the order, it would have been a stroke of policy and might have been justified on politic grounds. The true politician looks into the future and takes swift and certain measures to obtain the end he has in view.

The second time that the Prince of Santa-Croce saw me at the Duchess of Fiano's, he asked me *ex abrupto* why I did not visit Cardinal de Bernis.

"I think of paying my suit to him to-morrow," said I.

"Do so, for I have never heard His Eminence speak of anyone with as much consideration as he does of you."

"He has been very kind to me and I shall always be grateful to him."

The cardinal received me the next day with every sign of delight at seeing me. He praised the reserve with which I had spoken of him to the prince and said he did not need to remind me of the necessity for discretion as to our old Venetian adventures.

"Your Eminence is a little stouter," I said. "Otherwise you look as fresh as ever and not at all changed."

"You are mistaken. I am very different from what I was then. I am fifty-five now and then I was thirty-six. Moreover, I am reduced to a vegetable diet."

"Is that to keep down the lusts of the flesh?"

"I wish people would think so; but no one does, I am afraid."

He was glad to hear that I bore a letter to the Venetian ambassador, which I had not yet presented. He said he would take care to give the ambassador a prejudice in my favour and that he would give me a good reception.

"We will begin to break the ice to-morrow," added this charming cardinal. "You shall dine with me and His Excellence shall hear of it."

He heard with pleasure that I was well provided for, as far as money was concerned, and that I had made up my mind to live simply and discreetly so long as I remained in Rome.

"I shall write about you to M— M—," he said. "I have always kept up a correspondence with that delightful nun."

I then amused him by the talk of my adventure with the men of Chambéry.

"You ought to ask the Prince of Santa-Croce to introduce you to

the princess. We might pass some pleasant hours with her, though not in our old Venetian style, for the princess is not at all like M— M—."

"And yet she serves to amuse Your Eminence?"

"Well, I have to be content with what I can get."

The next day, as I was getting up from dinner, the cardinal told me that M. Zuliani had written about me to the ambassador, who would be delighted to make my acquaintance, and, when I went, I had an excellent reception from him.

The Chevalier Erizzo, who is still alive, was a man of great intelligence, common sense and oratorical power. He complimented me on my travels and on my being protected by the State Inquisitors, instead of being persecuted by them. He kept me to dinner and asked me to dine with him whenever I had no other engagement.

The same evening I met Prince Santa-Croce at the duchess's and asked him to introduce me to his wife.

"She has been looking forward to that," he replied, "ever since the cardinal talked to her about you for more than an hour. You may call any day at eleven in the morning or two in the afternoon."

I called the very next day at two o'clock. She was taking her siesta in bed but, as I enjoyed the privileges allowed to a person of no consequence, she let me in directly. In a quarter of an hour I had seen through her entire character—young, pretty, lively, curious, merry and talkative; she had not enough patience to listen to my answers to her questions. She struck me as a toy, well adapted to amuse a man of affairs who felt the need of some distraction. The cardinal saw her regularly three times a day, the first thing in the morning he called to ask if she had had a good night; at three o'clock in the afternoon he took coffee with her; in the evening he met her at the assembly. He always played piquet and played with such talent that he invariably lost six Roman sequins, no more and no less. These losses of the cardinal's made the princess the richest young wife in Rome.

Although the marquis was somewhat inclined to be jealous, he could not possibly object to his wife enjoying a revenue of eighteen hundred francs a month and that without the least scandal, for everything was done in public and the game was honestly conducted. Why should not Fortune fall in love with such a pretty woman?

The Prince of Santa-Croce could not fail to appreciate the cardinal's friendship for his wife, who gave him a child every year and sometimes every nine months, in spite of the doctor's warnings to beware of results:

The Cardinal's friendship for his wife also gave the prince the advantage of getting silks from Lyons without the Pope's treasurer being able to say anything, as the packets were addressed to the French ambassador. It must also be noted that the cardinal's patronage kept other lovers from the house. The High Constable Colonna was very much taken with her. The prince had surprised this gentleman talking to the princess in a room of the palace and at an hour when she was certain that his ring at the door bell was not announcing His Eminence, the cardinal. Scarcely had the High Constable gone, when the prince told

his wife to hold herself ready to accompany him into the country the next day. She protested, saying that this sudden order was only a caprice and that her honour would not allow of her obeying him. The prince, however, was very determined and she would have been obliged to go if the cardinal had not come in and heard the story from the mouth of the innocent princess. He showed the husband that it was to his own interests to go into the country by himself and let his wife remain in Rome. He spoke for her, assuring the prince that she would take more care in future and avoid such meetings, liable to give rise to unfortunate misunderstandings and disturb the peace of the household.

In less than a month I became the shadow of the three principal persons in this play. I listened and admired and became as necessary to the personages as a marker at billiards. When any of the parties were afflicted, I consoled them with tales or amusing comments and naturally they were grateful to me. I saw in the cardinal, the prince and his beautiful wife three persons of charming disposition, sufficiently discreet and broad-minded to find pleasure in life by innocent means which did no harm at all to the tranquillity or the good usages of society.

The Duchess of Fiano prided herself on being the possessor of the prince, who left his wife to the cardinal, but no one was deceived but the duchess. The good lady wondered why no one acknowledged that the reason why the princess never came to see her was mere jealousy. She spoke to me on the subject with so much fire one day that I had to suppress my good sense to keep her good graces. I had to express my astonishment as to what the cardinal could see in the princess, who, according to her, was skinny in person and silly in mind, altogether a woman of no consequence. I agreed to all this, but I was far from thinking so, for the princess was just the woman to amuse a voluptuous and philosophic lover like the cardinal.

I could not help thinking now and again that the cardinal was happier in the possession of this treasure of a woman than in his honours and dignities.

I loved the princess, but, as I did not hope for success, I confined myself strictly to the limits of my position. I might, perhaps, have succeeded, but, more probably, I should have raised her pride against me and wounded the feelings of the cardinal, who was no longer the same as when we shared M— M— in common. He had told me that his affection for her was of a purely fatherly character, and I took that as a hint not to trespass on his preserves.

I had reason to congratulate myself that she observed no more ceremony with me than with her maid. I accordingly pretended to see nothing, while she felt certain I saw all.

It is no easy matter to win the confidence of such a woman, especially if she be served by a king or a cardinal.

My life in Rome was a tranquil and happy one. Margarita had contrived to gain my interest by the assiduity of her attentions. I had no servant, so she waited on me night and morning and her false eye was such an excellent match that I quite forgot its falsity. She was a clever

but vain girl and, though at first I had no designs upon her, I flattered her vanity by my conversation and by the little presents I bestowed upon her, which enabled her to cut a figure in church on Sundays. So, before long, I had my eyes opened to two facts: one, that she was sure of my love and wondered why I did not declare it; the other, that, if I chose, I had an easy conquest before me.

I guessed the latter circumstance one day when, after I had asked her to tell me her adventures from the age of eleven to that of eighteen, she proceeded to tell me tales the telling of which necessitated her throwing all modesty to the winds.

I took the utmost delight in these scandalous narrations and, whenever I thought she had told me the whole truth, I gave her a few pieces of money, while, whenever I had reason to suppose that she had suppressed some interesting circumstances, I gave her nothing.

We had for neighbour a young Piedmontese abbé named Cerutti, on whom Margarita was obliged to wait when her mother was too busy. I jested with her about him, but she swore there was no love-making between them.

This abbé was a fine man, learned and witty, but he was overwhelmed with debt and in very bad odour in Rome on account of an extremely unpleasant story, of which he was the hero. They said he had told an Englishman, who was in love with Princess Lanti, that she was in need of two hundred sequins, that the Englishman had handed over the money to the abbé and the latter had appropriated it.

This act of meanness had been brought to light by an explanation between the lady and the Englishman. On his saying to the princess that he was ready to do anything for her and that the two hundred sequins he had given her were as nothing in comparison with what he was ready to do, she indignantly denied all knowledge of the transaction. Everything came out. The Englishman begged pardon and the abbé was excluded from the princess's house and from the Englishman's also.

This Abbé Cerutti was one of those journalists employed by Bianconi to write the weekly news of Rome; he and I had become friends as soon as we became neighbours. I saw that he loved Margarita and I was not in the least jealous but, as he was a handsome young fellow, I could not believe that Margarita was cruel to him. Nevertheless, she assured me that she detested him and was very sorry that her mother made her wait on him at all.

Cerutti had already laid himself under obligations to me. He had borrowed a score of crowns from me, promising to repay them in a week, and three weeks had gone by without my seeing the money. However, I did not ask for it and would have lent him as much more if he had requested me. But I must tell the story as it happened.

Whenever I supped with the Duchess of Fiano, I came in late and Margarita waited up for me. Her mother would go to bed. For the sake of amusement I used to keep her up for an hour or two, without caring whether our pleasantries disturbed the abbé, who could hear everything we said.

One evening I came home at midnight and was surprised to find the mother waiting for me.

"Where is your daughter?" I inquired.

"She's asleep and I really cannot allow you to pass the whole night with her any longer."

"But she stays with me only until I get into bed. This new whim wounds my feelings. I object to such unworthy suspicions. What has Margarita been telling you? If she has made any complaints of me, she has lied and I shall leave your house to-morrow."

"You are wrong; Margarita has made no complaints; on the contrary, she says you have done nothing to her."

"Very well. Do you think there is any harm in a little joking?"

"No, but you might be better employed."

"And these are your grounds for a suspicion of which you should be ashamed if you are a good Christian."

"God save me from thinking evil of my neighbour, but I have been informed that your laughter and your jests are of such a nature as to be offensive to people of morality."

"Then it is my neighbour, the abbé, who has been foolish enough to give you this information?"

"I cannot tell you how I heard it, but I have heard it."

"Very well. To-morrow I shall seek another lodging, so as to afford your tender conscience some relief."

"Can't I attend on you as well as my daughter?"

"No; your daughter makes me laugh and laughing is beneficial to me, whereas you would not make me laugh at all. You have insulted me and I leave your house to-morrow."

"I shall have to tell my husband the reason of your departure and I do not want to do that."

"You can do as you like; that's no business of mine. Go away; I want to get into bed."

"Allow me to wait on you."

"Certainly not; if you want anybody to wait on me, send Margarita."

"She's asleep."

"Then wake her up."

The good woman went her way and two minutes later the girl came in with little on but her chemise. She had not had time to put in her false eye and her expression was so amusing that I went off into a roar of laughter.

"I was sleeping soundly," she began, "and my mother woke me up all of a sudden and told me to come and wait on you, or else you would leave and my father would think we had been in mischief."

"I will stay if you continue to wait on me."

"I should like to come very much, but we mustn't laugh any more, as the abbé has complained of us."

"Oh! it is the abbé, is it?"

"Of course it is. Our jests and laughter irritate his passions."

"The rascal! We will punish him in rare fashion. If we laughed last night, we will laugh ten times louder to-night."

Thereupon we began a thousand tricks, accompanied by shouts and shrieks of laughter, purposely calculated to drive the little priest desperate. When the fun was at its height, the door opened and the mother came in. I had Margarita's nightcap on my head and Margarita's face was adorned with two huge moustaches, which I had smeared on with ink. Her mother had probably expected to catch us in the act but, when she came in, she was obliged to re-echo our shouts of mirth.

"Come now," said I, "do you think our amusements criminal?"

"Not a bit, but you see, your innocent orgies keep your neighbour awake."

"Then he had better go and sleep somewhere else; I am not going to put myself out for him. I will even say that you must choose between him and me; if I consent to stay with you, you must send him away and I will take his room."

"I can't send him away until the end of the month and I am afraid he will say things to my husband which will disturb the peace of the house."

"I promise you he shall go to-morrow and say nothing at all. Leave him to me; the abbé shall leave of his own free will without giving you the slightest trouble. In future, be afraid for your daughter when she is alone with a man and you *don't* hear them laughing. When one does not laugh, one does something serious."

After this the mother seemed satisfied and went off to bed. Margarita was in high spirits over the promised dismissal of the abbé. We passed an hour together *without laughing* and she left me, very proud of the victory she had gained.

Early the next day I paid the abbé a visit and, after reproaching him for his behaviour, I gave him his choice between paying me the money he owed me and leaving the house at once. He did his best to get out of the dilemma but, seeing that I was pitiless, he said he could not leave without paying a few small sums he owed the landlord and without the wherewithal to obtain another lodging.

"Very well," said I, "I will present you with another twenty crowns; but you must go to-day and not say a word to anyone, unless you wish me to become your implacable enemy."

I thus got rid of him and entered into the possession of the two rooms. Margarita was always at my disposal and, after a few days, so was a friend of hers, Buonacorsi, who was much the prettier of the two.

The two girls introduced me to the young man who had seduced them. He was a lad of fifteen or sixteen and very handsome, though short. At Lampsacus he would no doubt have had an altar erected to him beside that of Priapus, with which divinity he might well have contended.

He was well mannered and agreeable and seemed much above a common workman. He did not love Margarita or Mlle. Buonacorsi, he had merely satisfied their curiosity. They saw and admired and wished to

come to a nearer acquaintance; he read their minds and offered to satisfy them. Thereupon, the two girls held a consultation and, pretending to submit out of mere complaisance, the double deed was done. I liked this young man and gave him linen and clothes. So, before long he had complete confidence in me. He told me he was in love with a girl but, unhappily for him, she was in a convent and, not being able to win her, he was becoming desperate. The chief obstacle to the match lay in the fact that his earnings amounted to only a paul a day, which was certainly an insufficient sum to support a wife on.

He talked so much about her that I became curious and expressed a desire to see her. But, before coming to this, I must recite some other incidents of my stay in Rome.

One day I went to the Capitol to see the prizes given to the art students and the first face I saw was that of Mengs. He was with Battoni and two or three other painters, all occupied in adjudging the merits of the various pictures. I had not forgotten his treatment of me in Madrid, so I pretended not to see him, but, as soon as he saw me, he came up and greeted me amicably, saying, "My dear Casanova, let us forget what happened in Madrid and be friends once more."

"So be it, provided no allusion is made to the cause of our quarrel; for I warn you that I cannot speak of it and keep my head cool."

"I dare say; but, if you had understood my position in Madrid, you would never have obliged me to take a course which gave me great pain."

"I do not understand you."

"I dare say not. You must know, then, that I was strongly suspected of being a Protestant and, if I had shown myself indifferent to your conduct, I might possibly have been ruined. But dine with me to-morrow; we will make up a party of friends and drown any ill feeling in a good bottle of wine. I know that you do not receive your brother, so he shall not be there. Indeed, I do not receive him myself, for, if I did, all honest people would give me the cold shoulder."

I accepted his friendly invitation and was punctual to the appointment.

My brother left Rome a short time afterwards with Prince Biloselski, the Russian ambassador to Dresden, with whom he had come; but his visit was unsuccessful, as Rezzonico proved inexorable. We saw each other only two or three times in Rome.

Three or four days after he had gone, I had the agreeable surprise of seeing my brother the priest, in rags as usual. He had the impudence to ask me to help him.

"Where do you come from?"

"From Venice; I had to leave the place, as I could no longer make a living there."

"Then how do you plan to make a living in Rome?"

"By saying masses and teaching French."

"You, a teacher of languages! Why, you do not know your native tongue."

"I know Italian and French, too, and I have already two pupils."

"They will no doubt make wonderful progress under your fostering care. Who are they?"

"The son and daughter of the innkeeper at whose house I am staying. But that's not enough to keep me and you must give me something while I am starting."

"You have no right to count on me. Leave the room."

I would not listen to another word and told Margarita to see that he did not come in again.

The wretched fellow did his best to ruin me with all my friends, including the Duchess of Fiano and the Abbé Gama. Everybody told me I should either give him some help or get him out of Rome; I got heartily sick of the sound of his name. At last the Abbé Cerutti came and told me that, if I did not want to see my brother begging his bread in the streets, I must give him some assistance.

"You can maintain him outside of Rome," he said, "and he is ready to go if you will allow him three pauls a day."

I consented and Cerutti hit on a plan which pleased me very much. He spoke to a priest who served a convent of Franciscan nuns. This priest took my brother into his service and gave him three pauls for saying one mass every day, without taking into account the small perquisites he would have if he made a success at preaching, of which the nuns of the convent were very fond.

Thus the Abbé Casanova passed away and I did not care whether he knew or not where the three pauls came from. As long as I stayed in Rome, the nine piastres a month came to him regularly, but after my departure he returned to Rome, went to another convent and died there suddenly thirteen or fourteen years ago.

Medini had also arrived in Rome, but we had not seen each other. He lived in the street of the Ursulines with one of the Pope's light-cavalry men and subsisted on the money he cheated from strangers.

The rascal had done well and had sent to Mantua for his mistress, who came with her mother and a very pretty girl of twelve or thirteen. Thinking it would be to his advantage to take handsome furnished apartments, he moved to the Piazza di Spagna and occupied a house four or five doors from me, but I knew nothing of all this at the time.

Going to dine one day with the Venetian ambassador, His Excellency told me that I would meet at dinner a certain Count Manucci, who had just arrived from Paris and had evinced much delight on learning that I was in Rome.

"I suppose you know him well," said the ambassador, "and, as I am going to present him to the Holy Father to-morrow, I should be much obliged if you could tell me who he really is."

"I knew him in Madrid, where he lived with Mocenigo, our ambassador; he is a well-mannered, polite and fine-looking young man and that's all I know about him."

"Was he received at the Spanish Court?"

"I think so, but I cannot be positive."

"Well, I think he was not received, but I see that you won't tell me all you know about him. It's of no consequence; I shall run no risk in presenting him to the Pope. He says he is descended from Manucci, the famous traveller of the thirteenth century, and from the celebrated printers of the same name who did so much for literature. He showed me the Aldine anchor on his coat of arms, which has sixteen quarters."

I was astonished beyond measure that this man, who had plotted my assassination, should speak of me as an intimate friend and I determined to conceal my feelings and await events. I did not show the least sign of anger and when, after greeting the ambassador, he came up to me with open arms, I received him cordially and asked after Mocenigo.

Manucci talked a great deal at dinner, telling a score of lies, all in my honour, about my reception in Madrid. I believe his object was to force me to lie, too, and to make me do the same for him another time.

I swallowed all these bitter pills, for I had no choice in the matter, but I made up my mind I would have a thorough explanation the next day.

A Frenchman, the Chevalier de Neuville by name, who had come with Manucci, interested me a great deal. He had come to Rome to endeavour to obtain the annulment of marriage of a lady who was in a convent in Mantua. He had a special recommendation to Cardinal Galli. His conversation was particularly agreeable, and, when we left the ambassador's, I accepted the offer to get into his carriage with Manucci and we drove about till the evening.

As we were returning at nightfall, he told us he was going to present us to a pretty girl, at whose house we would sup and have a game of faro.

The carriage stopped at the Piazza di Spagna, a short distance from my lodging, and we went up to a room on the second floor. When I went in, I was surprised to see Count Medini and his mistress, the lady whom the chevalier had praised and whom I found not at all to my taste. Medini received me cordially and thanked the Frenchman for having made me forget the past and for having brought me to see him.

M. de Neuville looked astonished and, to avoid any unpleasant explanations, I turned the conversation.

When Medini thought a sufficient number of punters were present, he sat down at a large table, placed five or six hundred crowns in gold and notes before him and began to deal. Manucci lost all the gold he had about him, Neuville swept away half the bank and I was content with the humble part of spectator.

After supper Medini asked the chevalier to give him his revenge and Manucci asked me to lend him a hundred sequins. I did so and in an hour he had not one left. Neuville, on the other hand, brought down Medini's bank to twenty or thirty sequins and after that we retired to our several homes.

Manucci lodged with my sister-in-law, Roland's daughter, and I had made up my mind to give him an early call, but he did not leave me the opportunity, as he called on me early in the morning.

After returning me the hundred sequins, he embraced me affectionately and, showing me a large letter of credit on Bettoni, said that I must consider his purse as mine. In short, though he said nothing about the past, he gave me to understand that he wished to initiate a mutual policy of "forget and forgive."

On this occasion my heart proved too strong for my brain; such has often been the case with me. I agreed to the articles of peace he offered and required.

Besides, I was no longer at that headstrong age which knows only one kind of satisfaction, that of the sword. I remembered that, if Manucci had been wrong, so had I and I felt that my honour ran no danger of being compromised.

The day after I went to dinner with him. The Chevalier de Neuville came in towards the close of the meal and Medini a few moments later. The latter called on us to hold a bank, each in his turn, and we agreed. Manucci gained double what he had lost; Neuville lost four hundred sequins, and I lost only a trifle. Medini, who had lost only about fifty sequins, was quite desperate and would have thrown himself out of the window.

A few days later Manucci set out for Naples, after giving a hundred louis to Medini's mistress, who used to sup with him; but this windfall did not save Medini from being imprisoned for debt, his liabilities amounting to more than a thousand crowns.

The poor wretch wrote me doleful epistles, entreating me to come to his assistance; but the sole effect of his letters was to make me look after what he called his "family," repaying myself with the enjoyment of his mistress's young sister. I did not feel called upon to behave generously to him for nothing.

About this time the Emperor of Germany came to Rome with his brother, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. One of the noblemen in their suite made the girl's acquaintance and gave Medini enough to satisfy his creditors. He left Rome soon after recovering his liberty and we shall meet him again in a few months.

I lived very happily amongst friends I had made for myself. In the evenings I visited the Duchess of Fiano; in the afternoons, the Princess of Santa-Croce. The rest of my time I spent at home, where I had Margarita, the fair Buonacorsi and young Menicuccio, who told me so much about his lady-love that I felt quite curious to see her.

The girl was in a kind of convent, where she had been placed at the age of ten out of charity. She could leave it only to get married with the consent of the cardinal who superintended the establishment. When a girl went out and got married, she received a dower of two hundred Roman crowns.

Menicuccio had a sister in the same convent and was allowed to visit her on Sundays; she came to the grating, followed by her governess. Though Menicuccio was her brother, she was not permitted to see him alone.

Five or six months before the date of which I am writing, his sister

had been accompanied to the grating by another girl, whom he had never seen before, and he immediately fell in love with her.

The poor young man had to work hard all the week and could visit the convent only on holidays and even then he had rarely the good luck to see his lady-love. In five or six months, he had seen her only seven or eight times.

His sister knew of his love and would have done all in her power for him, but the choice of a companion did not rest with her and she was afraid of asking for this particular girl, for fear of exciting suspicion.

As I have said, I had made up my mind to pay the place a visit and on our way Menicuccio told me that the women of the convent were not nuns, properly speaking, as they had never taken any vow and did not wear a monastic dress. In spite of that, they had few temptations to leave their prison house, as they would only find themselves alone in the world, with the prospect of starvation or hard work before them. The young girls came out only in order to get married, which was uncommon, or by flight, which was extremely difficult.

We reached a vast, ill-built house, near one of the town gates—a lonely and deserted situation, as the gate led to no highway. When we went into the parlour, I was astonished to see the double grating, with bars so close together that the hand of a girl of ten could scarce go through. The grating was so fine that it was extremely difficult to make out the features of the persons standing on the inner side, especially as this was lighted only by the uncertain reflection from the outer room. The sight of these arrangements made me shudder.

"How and where have you seen your mistress," I asked Menicuccio, "for I see nothing but darkness?"

"The first time the governess chanced to have a candle, but this privilege is confined, under pain of excommunication, to relatives."

"Then she will have a light to-day?"

"I expect not, as the porteress will have sent up word that there is a stranger with me."

"But how could you see your sweetheart, as you are not related to her?"

"By chance; the first time she came, my sister's governess, a good soul, said nothing about it. Ever since, there has been no candle when she has been present."

Soon after the forms of three or four women were dimly to be seen; but there was no candle and the governess would not bring one under any consideration. She was afraid of being found out and excommunicated.

I saw that I was depriving my young friend of a pleasure and would have gone, but he told me to stay. I passed an hour which interested me in spite of its painfulness. The voice of Menicuccio's sister sent a thrill through me and I fancied that the blind must fall in love through their sense of hearing. The governess was a woman under thirty. She

told me that, when the girls attained their twenty-fifth year, they were placed in charge of the younger ones and at thirty-five they were free to leave the convent if they liked, but that few cared to take this step, for fear of falling into misery.

"Then there are a good many old women here?"

"There are a hundred of us, and the number is decreased only by death and by occasional marriages."

"But how do those who go out to get married succeed in inspiring the love of their husbands?"

"I have been here for twenty years and in that time only four have gone out and they did not know their husbands till they met them at the altar. As might be expected, the men who solicit the cardinal for our hands are either madmen or fellows of desperate fortunes who need the two hundred piastres. However, the cardinal-superintendent refuses permission, unless the postulant can satisfy him that he is capable of supporting a wife."

"How does he choose his bride?"

"He tells the cardinal what age and disposition he would prefer and the cardinal informs the Mother Superior."

"I suppose you keep a good table and are comfortably lodged."

"Not at all. Three thousand crowns a year are not much to keep a hundred persons. Those who do a little work and earn something are the best off."

"What manner of people put their daughters in such a prison?"

"Either poor people or bigots who are afraid of their children falling into evil ways. We receive only pretty girls here."

"Who is the judge of their prettiness?"

"The parents, the priest and on final appeal the cardinal-superintendent, who rejects plain girls without pity, observing that ugly women have no reason to fear the seductions of vice. So you may imagine that, wretched as we are, we curse those who pronounced us pretty."

"I pity you and I wonder why leave is not given to see you openly; you might have some chance of getting married then."

"The cardinal says that it is not in his power to give permission, as anyone transgressing the foundation is excommunicated."

"Then I should imagine that the founder of this house is now consumed by the flames of Hell."

"We all think so and we do not pray for his release. The Pope ought to put some order in this house."

I gave her ten crowns, saying that, as I could not see her, I could not promise a second visit, and then I went away with Menicuccio, who was angry with himself for having procured me such a tedious hour.

"I suppose I shall never see your mistress or your sister," said I. "Your sister's voice went to my heart."

"I should think your ten piastres ought to work miracles."

"I suppose there is another parlour."

"Yes; but only priests are allowed to enter it, under pain of excommunication, unless you get leave from the Holy Father."

I could not imagine how such a monstrous establishment could be tolerated, for it was almost impossible under the circumstances for the poor girls to get a husband. I calculated that, as two hundred piastres were assigned to each as a dowry in case of marriage, the founder must have calculated on two marriages a year, at least, and it seemed probable that these sums were made away with by some scoundrel.

I laid my ideas before Cardinal de Bernis in the presence of the princess, who seemed moved with compassion for these poor women and said I must write out a petition and get it signed by all of them, entreating the Holy Father to allow them the privileges customary in all other convents.

The cardinal told me to draft the supplication, obtain the signatures and place it in the hands of the princess. In the meantime he would get the ear of the Holy Father and ascertain by whose hands it was most proper for the petition to be presented.

I felt pretty sure of the signatures of the greater number of the recluses and, after writing out the petition, I left it in the hands of the governess to whom I had spoken before. She was delighted with the idea and promised to give me back the paper when I came again, with the signatures of all her companions in misfortune.

As soon as the Princess Santa-Croce had the document, she addressed herself to the Cardinal-Superintendent Orsini, who promised to bring the matter before the Pope. Cardinal de Bernis had already spoken to His Holiness.

The chaplain of the institute was ordered to warn the Superior that in future visitors were to be allowed to see the girls in the large parlour, provided they were accompanied by a governess. Menicuccio brought me this news, which the princess had not heard and which she was delighted to hear from my lips.

The worthy Pope did not stop there. He ordered that proceedings be started against those in charge of the institution and that they be forced to render a strict accounting of all their peculations during the hundred years and more of its existence. He reduced the number of inmates from a hundred to fifty, doubling the dower. He also ordered that all girls who reached the age of twenty-five without getting married should be sent away with their four hundred crowns apiece, that twelve discreet matrons should have charge of the younger girls and that twelve servants should be paid to do the hard work of the house.

CHAPTER 137

THESE innovations were the work of some six months. The first reform was the abolition of the prohibition against entering the large parlour and even the interior of the convent (for, as the inmates had

taken no vows and were not cloistered nuns, the Superior should have been at liberty to act according to her discretion). Menicuccio had learnt this from a note his sister wrote him and which he brought to me in high glee, asking me to come with him to the convent, according to the request of his sister, who said my presence would be acceptable to the governess. I was to ask for the governess.

I was only too glad to lend myself to this pleasant arrangement and felt curious to see the faces of the recluses, as well as to hear what they had to say on these great changes.

When we got into the large parlour, I saw two grates, one occupied by the Abbé Guasco, whom I had known at Juliette's in Paris in 1751, the other by a Russian nobleman, Ivan Ivanovitch Schuvaloff, and by Father Jacquier, a friar minim of the Trinità dei Monti and a learned astronomer. Behind the grate, I saw three very pretty girls. When our friends came down, we began a very interesting conversation, which had to be conducted in a low tone, for fear of our being overheard. We could not talk at our ease till the other visitors had taken their leave. My young friend's mistress was a very pretty girl, but his sister was a ravishing beauty. She had just entered on her sixteenth year, but she was tall and her figure well developed—in short, she enchanted me. I thought I had never seen a whiter skin or blacker hair and eyebrows and eyes, but still more charming was the sweetness of her voice and expression and the naïve simplicity of her remarks. Her governess, who was ten or twelve years older than she, was a woman of an extremely interesting countenance; she was pale and melancholy-looking, no doubt from the fires which she had been forced to quench within her. She delighted me by telling me of the confusion which the new regulations had caused in the house.

"The Mother Superior is well pleased," she said, "and all my young companions are overjoyed; but the older ones, whom circumstance has made into bigots, are scandalised at everything. The Superior has already given orders for windows to be made in the dark parlours, though the old women say that she cannot go beyond the concessions she has already received. To this the Superior answered that, as free communication had been allowed, it would be absurd to retain the darkness. She has also given orders for the alteration of the double grating, as there is only a single one in the large parlour."

I thought the Superior must be a woman of intelligence, and expressed a desire to see her. Emilie obtained this pleasure for me the following day. Emilie was the friend of Armelline, Menicuccio's sister.

This first visit lasted two hours and seemed all too short. Menicuccio talked with his well beloved at the other grating.

I went away, after having given them ten Roman crowns, as before. I kissed Armelline's fair hands and, as she felt the contact of my lips, her face was suffused by a vivid blush. Never had the lips of man touched those dainty hands before and she looked quite astounded at the ardour with which I did it.

I went home full of love for her and, without heeding the obstacles

in my path, gave reins to my passion, which seemed to me the most ardent I had ever experienced.

My young friend was in an ocean of bliss. He had declared his love and the girl had said that she would gladly become his wife if he could get the cardinal's consent. As this consent depended only on his ability to support himself, I promised to give him a hundred crowns and my patronage. He had served his time as a tailor's apprentice and was in a position to open a shop of his own.

"I envy your lot," said I, "for your happiness is assured, while I, though I love your sister, despair of possessing her."

"Are you married, then?" he asked.

"Alas, yes! Keep my counsel, for I purpose visiting her every day and, if it were known that I am married, my visits would be received with suspicion."

I was obliged to tell this lie in order to avoid the temptation of marrying her and to prevent Armelline thinking I was courting her with that intention.

I found the Superioress a polite and clever woman, wholly free from prejudices. After coming down to the grate to oblige me, she sometimes came for her own pleasure. She knew that I was the author of the happy reform in the institution and told me that she considered herself under great obligations to me. In less than six weeks three of her girls made excellent marriages and six hundred crowns had been added to the yearly income of the house.

She told me she was ill-pleased with one of their confessors. He was a Dominican and made it a rule that his penitents should approach the Holy Table every Sunday and feast days; he kept them for hours in the confessional and imposed penances and fastings which were likely to injure the health of young girls.

"All this," said she, "cannot improve them from a moral point of view and takes up a lot of their time, so that they have none left for their work, by the sale of which they procure some small comforts for themselves."

"How many confessors have you?"

"Four."

"Are you satisfied with the other three?"

"Yes, they are sensible men and do not ask too much of poor human nature."

"I will carry your just complaint to the cardinal; will you write out your petition?"

"Kindly give me a model."

I gave her a rough draft, which she copied out and signed, and I laid it before His Eminence. A few days later the Dominican was removed and his penitents divided amongst the three remaining confessors. The younger members of the community felt toward me a great debt of gratitude on account of this change.

Menicuccio went to see his sweetheart every holiday, while I in my amorous ardour visited his sister every morning at nine o'clock. I

breakfasted with her and Emilie and remained in the parlour till eleven. As there was only one grating, I could lock the door behind me, but we could be seen from the interior of the convent, as the door was left open to admit light, there being no window. This was a great annoyance for me; recluses, young or old, were continually passing by and none of them failed to give a glance in the direction of the grating; thus my fair Armelline could not stretch out her hand to receive my amorous kisses.

Towards the end of December the cold became intense and I begged the Superior to allow me to place a screen in front of the door, as I feared I should catch cold otherwise. The worthy woman granted my request without any objection and we were at our ease thereafter, though the desires with which Armelline inspired me had become dreadful torment.

On the 1st day of January, 1771, I presented each of them with a good winter dress and sent the Superior a quantity of chocolate, sugar and coffee, all of which were extremely welcome.

Emilie often came by herself to the grating, as Armelline was not ready, and in the same way Armelline would come by herself when her governess happened to be busy. It was in these quarters of an hour that she succeeded in captivating me, heart and soul.

Emilie and Armelline were great friends, but their prejudices on the subject of sensual enjoyment were so strong that I could never get them to listen to licentious talk, allow certain small liberties which I would gladly have taken or afford me those pleasures of the eye that we accept in default of better things.

One day they were petrified by my asking them whether they did not sometimes sleep in the same bed, so as to give each other proofs of the tenderness of their mutual affection.

How they blushed!

Emilie asked me, with the most perfect innocence, what there was in common between affection and the inconvenience of sleeping two in a narrow bed. I took care not to explain myself, for I saw that I had frightened them. No doubt they were of the same flesh and blood as I, but our educations had differed widely. They had evidently never confided their little secrets to one another, possibly not even to their confessor, either through shame or with the idea that the liberties they indulged in alone were no sin.

I made them a present of some silk stockings, lined with plush to keep out the cold, and vainly endeavoured to make them try the stockings on before me. I might say as often as I pleased that there was no real difference between a man's legs and a woman's and that their confessor would laugh at them if they confessed to showing their legs. They answered only that girls were not allowed to take such a liberty, as they wore petticoats on purpose to conceal their legs.

The manner in which Emilie spoke, always with Armelline's approbation, convinced me that their modesty was genuine. I penetrated her idea; she thought that, in acceding to my request, she would be

lowering herself in my eyes and that I should despise her ever after. Nevertheless Emilie was a woman of twenty-seven and by no means a devotee.

As for Armelline, I could see that she took Emilie for her model and would have been ashamed of appearing less precise than her friend. I thought she loved me and that, contrary to the general rule, she would be more easily won by herself than in company with her friend.

I made the trial one morning when she appeared at the grating by herself, telling me that her governess was busy. I said that I adored her and was the most hapless of men for, being a married man, I had no hope of ever being able to clasp her in my arms and to cover her with kisses.

"Can I continue to live, dear Armelline, with no other consolation than that of kissing your fair hands?"

At these words, pronounced with so much passion, she fixed her gaze on me and after a few moments' reflection began to kiss my hands as ardently as I had kissed hers.

I begged her to put her mouth to the bars, that I might kiss it. She blushed and looked down and did nothing. I bewailed my fate bitterly, but in vain. She was deaf and dumb, till Emilie came and asked us why we were so dull.

About this time, the beginning of 1771, I was visited by Mariuccia, whom I had married off ten years before to a young hairdresser. My readers may remember how I met her at Abbé Momolo's. During the three months I had been in Rome, I had inquired in vain as to what had become of her, so that I was delighted when she made her appearance.

"I saw you at Saint Peter's," said she, "at the midnight mass on Christmas Eve but, not daring to approach you because of the people with whom I was, I told a friend of mine to follow you and find out where you lived."

"How is it that I have tried to find you in vain for the last three months?"

"My husband set up in Frascati eight years ago and we have lived there very happily ever since."

"I am very glad to hear it. Have you any children?"

"Four; and the eldest, who is nine years old, is very like you."

"Do you love her?"

"I adore her, but I love the other three as well."

As I wanted to go to breakfast with Armelline, I begged Margarita to keep Mariuccia company till my return.

Mariuccia dined with me and we spent a pleasant day together without attempting to renew our more tender relationship. We had plenty to talk about and she told me that Costa, my old servant, had come back to Rome in a splendid coach three years after I had left and had married one of Momolo's daughters.

"He's a rascal; he robbed me."

"I guessed as much; his theft did him no good. He left his wife two years after their marriage and no one knows what has become of him."

"How about his wife?"

"She is living miserably in Rome. Her father is dead."

I did not care to go and see the poor woman, for I could not do anything for her and I could not have helped saying that, if I caught her husband, I would do my best to have him hanged. Such was indeed my intention up to the year 1785, when I found this runagate in Vienna. He was then Count Erdich's man and, when we come to that period, the reader shall hear what I did.

I promised Mariuccia to come to see her during Lent.

The Princess Santa-Croce and the worthy Cardinal de Bernis pitied me for my hapless love; I often confided my sufferings to their sympathising ears. The cardinal told the princess that she could, very well obtain permission from Cardinal Orsini to take Armelline to the theatre and that, if I cared to join the party, I might find her less cruel.

"The cardinal will make no objection," said he, "as Armelline has taken no vows; but, as you must know our friend's mistress before making your request, you have only to tell the cardinal that you would like to see the interior of the house."

"Do you think he will give me leave?"

"Certainly; the inmates are not cloistered nuns. We will go with you."

"You will come, too? That will be a delightful party indeed."

"Ask for leave and we will arrange the day."

This plan seemed to me a delicious dream. I guessed that the gallant cardinal was curious to see Armelline, but I was not afraid, as I knew he was a constant lover. Besides, I felt sure that, if he took an interest in the fair recluse, he would be certain to find her a husband.

In three or four days the princess summoned me to her box in the Alberti Theatre and showed me Cardinal Orsini's note, allowing her and her friends to see the interior of the house.

"To-morrow afternoon," said she, "we will fix the day and the hour for the visit."

The next day I paid my usual visit to the recluses and the Superioress came to tell me that the cardinal had told her that the Princess Santa-Croce was coming to visit the house, with some friends.

"I know it," said I. "I am coming with her."

"When is she coming?"

"I don't know yet, but I will inform you later on."

"This novelty has turned the house upside down. The devotees scarcely know whether they are awake or dreaming, for, with the exception of a few priests, the doctor and the surgeon, no one has ever entered the house since its foundation."

"All these restrictions are now removed and you need not ask the cardinal's permission to receive visits from your friends."

"I know that, but I don't like to go so far."

The time for the visit was fixed for the afternoon of the next day and I let the Superioress know early the next morning. The Duchess of Fiano had asked to join us, the cardinal came dressed as a simple priest, with no indication of his exalted rank. He knew Armelline directly from my description and congratulated her on having made my acquaintance.

The poor girl blushed to the roots of her hair and I thought she would faint when the princess, after telling her she was the prettiest girl in the house, gave her two affectionate kisses, a mark of friendship strictly forbidden by the rules.

After these caresses, the princess proceeded to compliment the Superioress. She said that I had done well to praise her ability, as she could judge of it by the order and neatness which reigned everywhere.

"I shall mention your name to Cardinal Orsini," she added, "and you may be sure I shall do you all the justice you deserve."

When we had seen all the rooms, which contained nothing worth seeing, I presented Emilie to the princess, who received her with great cordiality.

"I have heard of your sadness," she said, "but I know the reason of it. You are a good girl and pretty, too, and I shall get you a husband who will cure you of your melancholy."

The Superioress gave a smile of approbation, but I saw a dozen aged devotees pulling wry faces.

Emilie dared not reply, but she took the princess's hand and kissed it, as if to summon her to keep her promise.

As for me, I was delighted to see that, though all the girls were really pretty, my Armelline eclipsed them all, as the light of the sun obscures the stars.

When we came down to the parlour, the princess told Armelline that she meant to ask leave of the cardinal to take her two or three times to the theatre before Lent began. This observation seemed to petrify everyone except the Superioress, who said that His Eminence had now a perfect right to relax any or all of the rules of the establishment, where the girls were being held only to make good marriages.

Poor Armelline was so overcome with joy and embarrassment that she could not speak. She seemed unable to find words wherein to thank the princess, who commended her and her friend Emilie to the Superioress before she left the house and gave her a small present to buy necessities for them. Not to be outdone, the Duchess of Fiano told the Superioress that she would make me the almoner of her bounty towards Armelline and Emilie.

My expressions of gratitude to the princess when we were back in the carriage may be imagined.

I had no need to make excuses for Armelline, for the princess and the cardinal had gauged her capacities. Her embarrassment had prevented her showing her cleverness, but her face proved her to possess it. Besides, the influence of the education she had received had to be taken into account.

The princess was impatient to take her to the theatre and afterwards to supper at an inn, according to the Roman custom. She wrote the names of Armelline and Emilie upon her tablets, so as to remember them on every occasion.

I did not forget the mistress of my poor friend Menicuccio, but the time was not opportune for mentioning her name. The next day, however, I got the cardinal's ear and told him I was anxious to do something for the young man. The cardinal saw him and Menicuccio pleased him so well that the marriage took place before the end of the carnival, the bride having a dowry of five hundred crowns. With this sum and the hundred crowns I gave him, he was in a position to open a shop for himself.

The day after the princess's visit was a triumphant one for me. As soon as I appeared at the grating, the Superioress was sent for and we had an interview. The princess had given her fifty crowns, which she was going to lay out on linen for Armelline and Emilie.

The recluses were stupefied when I told them that the fat priest was Cardinal de Bernis, as they had an idea that a cardinal could never doff the purple.

The Duchess of Fiano had sent a cask of wine, which was an unknown beverage there, and these presents made them hope for others. I was looked upon as the bringer of all this good luck and gratitude showed itself so plainly in every word and glance that I felt I might hope for everything.

A few days later the princess told Cardinal Orsini that she had taken a peculiar interest in two of the young recluses and, desiring to provide them with suitable establishments, she wished to take them now and again to the theatre, so as to give them some knowledge of the world. She undertook to take them and bring them back herself or to confide them only to sure hands. The cardinal replied that the Superioress would receive instructions to oblige her in every particular.

As soon as I heard of this from the princess, I said that I would ascertain what orders had been actually received at the convent. The next day, the Superioress told me that His Eminence had instructed her to do what she thought best for the welfare of the young people committed to her charge.

"I have also received orders," she added, "to send in the names of those who have attained the age of thirty and wish to leave the convent, that they may receive a warrant for their four hundred crowns. I have not yet published this command, but I haven't the slightest doubt that we shall get rid of a score at least."

I told the princess of the cardinal's orders and she agreed with me that his behaviour was most generous.

Cardinal de Bernis, who was by, advised her that, the first time she took the girls to the theatre, she had better go in person and tell the Superioress that she would always send her carriage and liveried servants to fetch them. The princess approved of this advice and a few days later she called for Emilie and Armelline and brought them

I wished them all happy slumbers and, after giving a sequin to the servant who opened the door and another to the coachman, I had myself set down at the door of my lodging. Margarita was asleep on a sofa and welcomed me with abuse, but she soon found out, by the ardour of my caresses, that I had not been guilty of infidelity.

I did not get up till noon and at three o'clock called on the princess and found the cardinal already there. They expected to hear the story of my triumph, but the tale I told and my apparent indifference in the matter came as a surprise.

I may as well confess that my face was by no means the index of my mind. However, I did my best to give the thing a comic turn, saying that I did not care for Pamelas and had made up my mind to give up the adventure.

"My dear fellow," said the cardinal, "I shall take two or three days before I congratulate you on your self-restraint."

His knowledge of the human heart was very extensive.

Armelline thought I must have slept late, as she did not see me in the morning as usual; but, when the second day went by without my coming, she sent her brother to ask if I were ill, for I had never let two days pass without paying her a visit. Menicuccio came accordingly and was delighted to find me in perfect health.

"Go and tell your sister," I said, "that I shall continue to interest the princess on her behalf, but that I shall see her no more."

"Why not?"

"Because I wish to cure myself of an unhappy passion. Your sister does not love me; I am sure of it. I am no longer a young man and don't feel inclined to become a martyr to her virtue. Virtue goes rather too far when it prevents a girl giving the man who adores her a single kiss."

"Indeed, I would not have believed that of her."

"Nevertheless, it is a fact, and I must make an end of it. Your sister cannot understand the danger she runs in treating a lover in this fashion. Tell her all that, my dear Menicuccio, but don't give her any advice of your own."

"You can't think how grieved I am to hear all this; perhaps it's Emilie's presence that makes her so cold."

"No; I have often pressed her when we have been alone, but all in vain. I want to cure myself for, if she does not love me, I do not wish to obtain her either by seduction or by any feeling of gratitude on her part. Tell me how your future bride treats you."

"Very well, ever since she has been sure of my marrying her."

I felt sorry then that I had given myself out as a married man for, in my state of irritation, I could even have given her a promise of marriage without deliberately intending to deceive her.

Menicuccio went on his way distressed and I went to the meeting of the Arcadians at the Capitol to hear the Marchioness d'Août recite her reception piece. This marchioness was a young Frenchwoman who had been in Rome for the last six months with her husband, a man of

many talents but inferior to her, for she was a genius. From this day I became her intimate friend but without the slightest idea of an intrigue, leaving all that to a French priest who was hopelessly in love with her and had thrown up his chances of preferment for her sake.

Every day the Princess Santa-Croce told me I could have the key of her box at the theatre whenever I liked, to take Armelline and Emilie, but, when a week passed by without my giving any sign, she began to believe that I had really broken off the connection.

The cardinal, on the other hand, believed me to be still in love and praised my conduct. He told me I would have a letter from the Superioress and he was right, for at the end of the week she wrote me a polite note, begging me to call on her, which I was obliged to do.

I called and she began by asking me plainly why my visits had ceased.

"Because I am in love with Armelline."

"If that reason brought you here every day, I do not see how it can have suddenly operated in another direction."

"And yet it is all quite natural for, when one loves, one desires and, when one desires in vain, one suffers and continual suffering is great unhappiness. And so you see that I am bound to act thus for my own sake."

"I pity you and see the wisdom of your course; but allow me to tell you that, esteeming Armelline, you have no right to lay her open to a judgment being passed upon her which is very far from the truth."

"And what judgment is that?"

"That your love was only a whim and that, as soon as it was satisfied, you abandoned her."

"I am sorry, indeed, to hear of this, but what can I do? I must cure myself of this unhappy passion. Do you know any other remedy than absence? Kindly advise me."

"I don't know much about the affection called 'love,' but it seems to me that by slow degrees love becomes friendship and peace is restored."

"True, but, if it is to become friendship, love must be gently treated. If the beloved object is not very tender, love grows desperate and turns to indifference or contempt. I neither wish to grow desperate nor to despise Armelline, who is a miracle of beauty and goodness. I shall do my utmost for her, just as if she had made me happy, but I will see her no more."

"I am in complete darkness on the matter. They assure me that they have never failed in their duty towards you and that they cannot imagine why you have ceased coming here."

"Whether from prudence or timidity or a delicate wish not to say anything against me, they have told you a lie; but you deserve to know all and my honour requires that I should tell you the whole story."

"Please do so; you may count on my discretion."

I then told my tale and I saw she was moved.

"I have always tried," she said, "never to believe evil except on com-

pulsion; nevertheless, knowing as I do the weakness of the human heart, I could never have believed that throughout so long and intimate an acquaintance you could have kept yourself so severely within bounds. In my opinion there would be much less harm in a kiss than in all this scandal."

"I am sure Armelline does not care."

"She does nothing but weep."

"Her tears probably spring from vanity or from the cause her companions may assign for my absence."

"No, I have told them all that you are ill."

"What does Emilie say?"

"She does not weep but looks sad and says over and over again that it is not her fault if you do not come, thereby hinting that it is Armelline's fault. Come to-morrow, to oblige me. They are dying to see the opera at the Aliberti and the comic opera at the Capronica."

"Very well; then I will breakfast with them to-morrow morning and to-morrow evening they shall see the opera."

"You are very good; I thank you. Shall I tell them the news?"

"Please tell Armelline that I am coming only because of what you have said to me."

The princess skipped for joy when she heard of my interview with the Superioress and the cardinal said he had guessed as much. The princess gave me the key of her box and ordered that her carriage and servants should be at my orders.

The next day, when I went to the convent, Emilie came down first, to reproach me on my cruel conduct. She told me that a man who really loved would not have acted in such a manner and that I had been wrong to tell the Superioress everything.

"I would not have said anything if I had had anything important to say."

"Armelline has become unhappy through knowing you."

"Why so?"

"Because she does not want to fail in her duty and she sees that you love her only to turn her from it."

"But her unhappiness will cease when I cease troubling her."

"Do you mean you are not going to see her any more?"

"Exactly. Do you think that it costs me no pain? But I must make the effort for the sake of my peace of mind."

"Then she will be sure that you do not love her."

"She must think what she pleases. In the meanwhile, I feel sure that, if she loved me as I love her, we should be of one mind."

"We have duties which seem to press lightly on you."

"Then be faithful to your duties and permit a man of honour to respect them by visiting you no more."

Armelline then appeared. I thought her changed.

"Why do you look so grave and pale?"

"Because you have grieved me"

"Come then, be gay once more and allow me to cure myself of a

passion which naturally makes me strive to induce you to fail in your duty. I shall be still your friend and will come to see you once a week while I remain in Rome."

"Once a week! You needn't have begun by coming once a day."

"You are right; it was your kind expression which deceived me, but I hope you will allow me to become rational again. For this to happen, I must try not to see you more than I can help. Think it over and you will see that I am doing all for the best."

"It's very hard that you can't love me as I love you."

"You mean calmly and without desires."

"I don't say that, but holding your desires in check if they are contrary to the voice of duty."

"I'm too old to learn that method and it does not seem to me an attractive one. Kindly tell me whether the restraint of your desires gives you much pain."

"I don't repress my desires when I think of you; I cherish them, I wish you were the Pope; I wish you were my father, that I might caress you in all innocence, in my dreams, I wish you could become a girl, so that we might always live happily together."

At this true touch of native simplicity I could not help smiling.

I told them I would come in the evening, to take them to the Aliberti and I felt in a better humour after my visit, for I could see that there was no art or coquetry in what Armelline said. I saw that she loved me but would not come to a parley with her love, hence her repugnance to granting me her favours, if she once did so, her eyes would be opened. All this was pure nature, for experience had not yet taught her that she ought either to avoid me or to succumb to my affection.

In the evening I called for the two friends to take them to the opera and I had not long to wait. I was by myself in the carriage, but they evinced no surprise. Emilie conveyed to me the compliments of the Superioress, who would be obliged by my calling on her the following day. At the opera I let them gaze at the spectacle, which they saw for the first time, and answered whatever questions they put to me. As they were Romans, they ought to have known what a *castrato* was, nevertheless Armelline took the wretched individual who sang the prima donna's part for a woman and pointed to his breast, which was really a fine one.

"Would you dare to sleep in the same bed with him?" I asked.

"No; an honest girl ought always to sleep by herself."

Such was the severity of the upbringing they had received. Everything connected with love was made a mystery of and treated with a kind of superstitious awe. Thus Armelline had let me kiss her hands only after a long contest and neither she nor Emilie would allow me to see whether the stockings I had given them fitted well or not. The severe prohibition that was laid on sleeping with another girl must have made them think that to show their nakedness to a companion would be a great sin and to let a man see their beauties, a hideous crime. The very idea of such a thing must have made them shudder.

Whenever I attempted to indulge in conversation which was a little free, I had found them deaf and dumb.

Although Emilie was a handsome girl in spite of her pallor, I did not take sufficient interest in her to try to dissipate her melancholy, but, loving Armelline to desperation, I was cut to the quick to see her look grave when I asked her if she had any idea of the difference between the physical conformation of men and women.

As we were leaving, Armelline said she was hungry, as she had scarcely eaten anything for the last week, on account of the grief I had caused her.

"If I had foreseen that," I answered, "I would have ordered a good supper, whereas I have now only pot-luck to offer you."

"Never mind. How many shall we be?"

"We three."

"So much the better; we shall be more at liberty."

"Then you don't like the princess?"

"I beg your pardon, but she wants me to kiss her in a way I don't like."

"Nevertheless you kissed her ardently enough."

"I was afraid she would take me for a simpleton if I did not do so."

"Then do you think you committed a sin in kissing her like that?"

"Certainly not, for it was very unpleasant for me."

"Then why don't you make the same effort on my behalf?"

She said nothing and, when we got to the inn, I ordered them to light a fire and to get a good supper ready.

The waiter asked me if I would like some oysters and, noticing the curiosity of my guests on the subject, I asked him how much they were.

"They are from the arsenal in Venice," he replied, "and we can't sell them under fifty pauls a hundred."

"Very well, I will take a hundred, but you must open them here."

Armelline was horrified to think that I was going to pay five crowns for her whim and begged me to revoke the order; but she said nothing when I told her that no pleasure of hers could be bought too dearly by me.

At this, she took my hand and would have carried it to her lips, but I took it away rather roughly, greatly to her mortification.

I was sitting in front of the fire between them and I was sorry to have grieved her.

"I beg pardon, Armelline," I said, "I took my hand away only because it was not worthy of being carried to your fair lips."

In spite of this excuse, she could not help two big tears coursing down her blushing cheeks. I was greatly pained.

Armelline was a tender dove, not made to be roughly treated. If I did not want her to hate me, I felt that I must either not see her at all or treat her more gently in future. Her tears convinced me that I had wounded her feelings bitterly and I got up and went out to order some champagne. When I came back, I found that she had been weeping terribly. I did not know what to do; I begged her again and again

to forgive me and to be gay once more, unless she wished to subject me to the severest of all punishments. Emilie backed me up and, on taking her hand and covering it with kisses, I had the pleasure of seeing her smile once more.

The oysters were opened in our presence and the astonishment depicted on the girls' countenances would have amused me if my heart had been more at ease. But I was desperate with love and Armelline begged me vainly to be as I was when we first met.

We sat down and I taught my guests how to suck up the oysters, which swam in their own liquid and were very good. Armelline swallowed half a dozen and then observed to her friend that so delicate a morsel must be a sin.

"Not on account of its delicacy," said Emilie, "but because, at every mouthful, we swallow half a paul."

"Half a paul!" said Armelline. "And the Holy Father does not forbid such a luxury? If this is not the sin of gluttony, I don't know what is. These oysters are delicious; but I shall speak about the matter to my director."

These simplicities of hers afforded me great mental pleasure, but I wanted bodily pleasure as well.

We ate fifty oysters and drank two bottles of sparkling champagne, which made my two guests erupt and blush and laugh at the same time.

I would fain have laughed, too, and devoured Armelline with my kisses, but I could devour her only with my eyes.

I kept the remainder of the oysters for dessert and ordered the supper to be served and, counting somewhat on the power of Bacchus, forbade water. It was an excellent meal and the two heroines enjoyed it; even Emilie became quite lively.

I ordered some lemons and a bottle of rum and, after having the fifty remaining oysters opened, I sent the waiter away. I then made a bowl of punch, pouring in a bottle of champagne as a finishing touch. After they had swallowed a few oysters and drunk one or two glasses of punch, which they liked amazingly, I begged Emilie to give me an oyster with her lips.

"I am sure you are too sensible to find anything wrong in that," I added.

Emilie was astonished at the proposition and thought it over. Armelline gazed at her anxiously, as if curious as to how she would answer me.

"Why don't you ask Armelline?" she said at length.

"Do you give him one first," said Armelline, "and, if you have the courage, I will try to do the same."

"What courage do you want? It's a child's game; there's no harm in it."

After this reply I was sure of victory. I placed the shell on the edge of her lips and, after a good deal of laughing, she sucked in the oyster, which she held between her lips. I instantly recovered it by placing my lips on hers.

Armelline clapped her hands, telling Emilie that she would never have thought her so brave; she then imitated her example and was delighted with my delicacy in sucking away the oyster, scarcely touching her lips with mine. My agreeable surprise may be imagined when I heard her say that it was my turn to hold the oysters. It is needless to say that I acquitted myself of the duty with much delight.

After these pleasant interludes, we went on drinking punch and swallowing oysters.

We all sat in a row, with our backs to the fire, and our brains began to whirl, but never was there such a sweet intoxication. However, the punch was not finished and we were getting very hot. I took off my coat and they were obliged to unlace their dresses, the bodices of which were lined with fur. Guessing at necessities which they did not dare to mention, I pointed out a closet where they could make themselves comfortable and they went in hand-in-hand. When they came out, they were no longer timid recluses, they were shrieking with laughter and reeling from side to side.

I was their screen, as we sat in front of the fire, and I gazed freely on charms which they could no longer conceal. I told them we must not think of going till the punch was finished and they agreed, saying in high glee that it would be a great sin to leave so good a thing behind.

I then presumed so far as to tell them that they had beautiful legs and that I should be puzzled to assign the prize between them. This made them gayer than ever, for they had not noticed that their unlaced bodices and short petticoats let me see almost everything.

After drinking our punch to the dregs, we remained talking for half an hour, while I congratulated myself on my self-restraint. Just as we were going, I asked them if they had any grounds of complaint against me. Armelline replied that, if I would adopt her as my daughter, she was ready to follow me to the end of the world.

"Then you are not afraid of my turning you from the path of duty?"

"No, I feel quite safe with you."

"And what do you say, dear Emilie?"

"I shall love you, too, when you do for me what the Superioress will tell you to-morrow."

"I will do anything, but I shan't come to speak to her till the evening, for it is three o'clock now."

They laughed all the louder, exclaiming, "What will the Mother say?"

I paid the bill, gave something to the waiter and took them back to the convent, where the portress seemed well enough pleased with the new rules when she saw two sequins in her palm. It was too late to see the Superioress, so I drove home, after rewarding the coachman and the lackey.

Margarita was ready to scratch my eyes out if I could not prove my fidelity, but I satisfied her, by quenching on her the fires Armelline and the punch had kindled. I told her I had been kept by a gaming party and she asked no more questions.

The next day I amused the princess and the cardinal by a circumstantial account of what had happened.

"You missed your opportunity," said the princess.

"I don't think so," said the cardinal. "I believe, on the contrary, that he has made his victory more sure for another time."

In the evening I went to the convent, where the Superioress gave me her warmest welcome. She complimented me on having amused myself with the two girls till three o'clock in the morning without doing anything wrong. They had told her how we had eaten the oysters and she said it was an amusing idea. I admired her candour, simplicity of philosophy, whichever you like to call it.

After these preliminaries she told me that I could make Emilie happy by obtaining through the influence of the princess a dispensation to marry, without the publication of banns, a merchant of Cività Vecchia, who would have married her long ago, only that there was a woman who pretended to have claims upon him. If banns were published, this woman would institute a suit, which might go on forever.

"If you do this," she concluded, "you will have the merit of making Emilie happy."

I took down the man's name and promised to do my best with the princess.

"Are you still determined to cure yourself of your love for Armeline?"

"Yes, but I shall not begin the cure till Lent."

"I congratulate you, the carnival is unusually long this year."

The next day, I spoke of the matter to the princess. The first requisite was a certificate from the bishop of Cività Vecchia, stating that the man was free to marry. The cardinal said that the man must come to Rome and that the affair could be managed if he could bring forward two good witnesses who would swear that he was unmarried.

I told the Superioress what the cardinal said and she wrote to the merchant and a few days later I saw him talking to the Superioress and Emilie through the grating.

He commended himself to my protection and said that, before he married, he wanted to be sure of having six hundred crowns.

The convent would give him four hundred crowns, so we should have to obtain a grant of two hundred more. I succeeded in getting the grant, but I first contrived to have another supper with Armeline, who asked me every morning when I was going to take her to the comic opera. I said I was afraid of turning her astray from the path of duty, but she replied that experience had taught her to dread me no longer.

CHAPTER 138

BEFORE that supper I had loved Armeline to such an extent that I had determined to see her no more, but after it I felt that I must obtain her or die. I saw that she had consented to my small liberties only

because she regarded them as mere jokes of no account and I resolved to take advantage of this way of looking at it and go as far as I could. I began to play an assumed indifference to the best of my ability, visiting her only every other day and looking at her with an expression of polite interest. I often pretended to forget to kiss her hand, while I kissed Emilie's and told her that, if I felt certain of receiving positive marks of her affection, I would stay at Civit  Vecchia for some weeks after she was married. I would pretend not to notice that such remarks made Armelline quiver, as she could not bear me to take a fancy to Emilie.

Emilie said she would be more at liberty when she was married, while Armelline, vexed at her giving me any hopes, told her sharply that a married woman had stricter duties to perform than a maid.

I agreed with her in my heart but, as it would not have suited my purpose to say so openly, I insinuated the false doctrine that a married woman's chief duty is to keep her husband's descent intact and that everything else is of trifling importance.

With the idea of driving Armelline to an extremity, I told Emilie that, if she wanted me to exert myself to my utmost for her, she must give me good hopes of obtaining her favours not only after, but before, marriage.

"I will give you no other pledges," she replied, "than those which Armelline may give you. You ought to try to get her married also."

In spite of her grief at these proposals, gentle Armelline replied, "You are the only man I have ever seen; and, as I have no hopes of getting married, I will give you no pledges at all, though I do not know what you mean by the word."

Though I saw how pure and angelic she was, I had the cruelty to go away, leaving her to her distress. It was hard for me to torment her thus, but I thought it the only way to overcome her prejudices.

Calling on the Venetian ambassador's steward, I saw some peculiarly fine oysters and got him to let me have a hundred. I then took a box at the Capronica Theatre and ordered a good supper at the inn where we had supped before.

"I want a room with a bed," I said to the waiter.

"That's not allowed in Rome, signor," he replied, "but on the third floor we have two rooms with large sofas, which might do instead without the Holy Office being able to say anything."

I looked at the rooms and took them and ordered the man to get the best supper Rome could offer.

As I was entering the box with the two girls, I saw the Marchioness d'Ao t was my near neighbour. She accosted me and congratulated herself on her vicinity to me. She was accompanied by her French abb , her husband and a fine-looking young man whom I had never seen before. She asked who my companions were and I told her they were in the Venetian ambassador's household. She praised their beauty and began to talk to Armelline, who answered with fitting remarks until the curtain went up. The young man also complimented her and,

after having asked my permission, gave her a large packet of bonbons, telling her to share them with her neighbour.

I had guessed him to be a Florentine from his accent and asked him if the sweets came from the banks of the Arno; he told me they were from Naples, whence he had just arrived.

At the end of the first act I was surprised to hear him say he had a letter for me from the Marchioness of C—.

"I have just heard your name," he said, "and to-morrow I shall have the honour of delivering the letter in person if you will kindly give me your address."

After these polite preliminaries I felt that I must comply with his request. I asked after the marquis, his mother-in-law and Anastasia, saying that I was delighted to hear from the marchioness, from whom I had been expecting an answer for the last month.

"The charming marchioness has deigned to entrust me with the answer you speak of."

"I long to read it."

"Then I may give you the letter now, though I shall still claim the privilege of calling on you to-morrow. I will bring it to you in your box if you will allow me."

"Pray do so."

He might easily have given it to me from the box where he was, but this would not have suited his plans. He came in and politeness obliged me to give him my place next to Armelline. He took out an elaborate wallet and gave me the letter. I opened it but, finding that it covered four pages, I said I would read it when I got home, as the box was poorly lighted.

"I shall stay in Rome till Easter," he said, "as I want to see all the sights—though, indeed, I cannot hope to see anything more beautiful than the vision now before me."

Armelline, who was gazing fixedly at him, blushed deeply. I felt that this compliment, though polite, was entirely out of place and in some ways an insult to me. However, I said nothing but decided mentally that the Florentine Adonis must be a fop of the first water.

Finding his compliment created a silence, he saw he had made himself offensive and after a few disconnected remarks withdrew from the box. In spite of myself, the man annoyed me and I congratulated Armelline on the rapidity of her conquest, asking her what she thought of him.

"He is a fine man, but his compliment shows he has no taste. Tell me, is it the custom for people of fashion to make a young girl blush the first time they see her?"

"No, dear Armelline, it is neither customary nor polite and anyone who wishes to mix in good society would never do such a thing."

I lapsed into silence, as though I wanted to listen to the music, but, as a matter of fact, my heart was a prey to cruel jealousy. I thought the matter over and came to the conclusion that the Florentine had treated me rudely. He might have guessed that I was in love with

Armeline and to make such an open declaration of love to my very face was nothing more nor less than an insult to me.

After I had kept this unusual silence for a quarter of an hour, the simple Armeline made me worse by saying that I must calm myself, as she assured me the young man's compliment had not given her the slightest pleasure. She did not see that, by saying this, she made me feel that the compliment had had the directly opposite effect. I said that I hoped he had pleased her.

To finish the matter up, she said, by way of soothing me, that the young man did not mean to vex me, as he doubtless took me for her father. What could I reply to this observation, as cruel as it was reasonable? Nothing, I could only take refuge in silence and in a fit of childish ill-humour.

At last I could bear it no longer and begged the two girls to come away with me. The second act was just over and, if I had been in my right senses, I should never have made them such an unreasonable request, but the crassness of my proceedings did not strike me till the following day.

In spite of the strangeness of my request, they merely exchanged glances and got ready to go. Not knowing what better excuse to give, I told them I did not want the princess's carriage to be noticed as everyone left the theatre and that I would bring them again to the theatre the following day.

I would not let Armeline put her head inside the Marchioness d'Août's box, and so we went out. I found the man who accompanied the carriage talking to one of his mates at the door of the theatre and this made me think that the princess had come to the opera.

We got down at the inn and I whispered to the man to take his horses home and call for us at three o'clock; for the cold was intense and both horses and men had to be considered.

We began by sitting down in front of a roaring fire and for half an hour we did nothing but eat oysters, which were opened in our presence by a clever waiter who took care not to lose a drop of the fluid. As quick as he opened, we ate and the laughter of the girls, who talked of how we had eaten them before, caused my anger gradually to disappear.

In Armeline's gentleness, I saw the goodness of her heart and I was angry with myself for my absurd jealousy of a man who was much more calculated to please a young girl than I.

Armeline drank champagne and stole occasional glances in my direction, as if to entreat me to join them in their mirth. Emilie talked of her marriage, and, without saying anything about my projected visit to Civit  Vecchia, I promised that her future husband should have his plenary dispensation before very long. As I talked, I kissed Armeline's fair hands and she looked at me, as if thankful for the return of my affection.

The oysters and champagne had their natural effect and we had a delightful supper. We had sturgeon and some delicious truffles, which

I enjoyed not so much for my own sake as for the pleasure with which my companions devoured them. A man in love is provided with a kind of instinct, which tells him that the surest way to success is to provide the beloved object with pleasures that are new to her.

When Armelline saw me become gay and ardent once more, she recognised her handiwork and was doubtless proud of the power she exercised over me. She took my hand of her own accord and continued gazing into my eyes. Emilie was occupied in the enjoyment of the meal and did not trouble herself about our behaviour. Armelline was so tender and loving that I felt sure of victory after we had had some more oysters and a bowl of punch.

When the dessert, the fifty oysters and all the materials for making the punch were on the table, the waiter left the room, saying that the ladies would find everything requisite in the neighbouring apartment.

The room was small and the fire very hot and I bade the two friends arrange their clothing more comfortably. Their dresses fitted their figures and were trimmed with fur and stiffened with whalebones, so they went into the next room and came back in white bodices and short dimity petticoats, laughing at the scantiness of their attire.

I had sufficient strength of mind to conceal my emotion and even not to look at their bosoms when they complained of having no neckerchiefs or breastbands to the chemises. I knew how inexperienced they were and felt certain that, when they saw the indifference with which I took their slight attire, they themselves would think it was of no consequence.

Armelline and Emilie both had beautiful breasts and knew it; they were therefore astonished at my indifference and perhaps thought that I had never seen fine bosoms. As a matter of fact, a fine figure is much more rare in Rome than a pretty face. Thus, in spite of their modesty, their vanity impelled them to show me that my indifference was ill-placed, but it was my part to put them at their ease and make them fling modesty to the winds.

They were enchanted when I told them to try their hands at a bowl of punch, and they simply danced for joy when I pronounced it better than my own brew.

Then came the oyster game and I scolded Armelline for swallowing the liquid as I was taking the oyster from her lips. I agreed that it was very hard to avoid doing so, but I offered to show them how it could be done by placing the tongue in the way. This gave me an opportunity of teaching them the game of tongues, which I shall not explain because it is well known to all true lovers. Armelline played her part with such evident relish that I could see she enjoyed it as well as I, though she agreed it was a very innocent amusement.

It so chanced that a fine oyster slipped from its shell as I was placing it between Emilie's lips. It fell on her bosom, and she would have recovered it with her fingers; but I claimed the right of regaining it myself and she had to unlace her bodice to let me do it. I got hold of the oyster with my lips but did so in such a manner as to prevent her

from suspecting that I had taken any extraordinary pleasure in the act. Armelline looked on without laughing; she was evidently surprised at the little interest I had taken in what was before my eyes. Emilie laughed and relaxed her bodice.

The opportunity was too good to be lost, so, taking Armelline on my lap, I gave her an oyster and let it slip as Emilie's had slipped, much to the delight of the elder, who wanted to see how her young companion would go through the ordeal. Armelline was really as much delighted herself, though she tried to conceal her pleasure.

"I want my oyster," said I.

"Get it, then."

There was no need to tell me twice. I unlaced her corset in such a way as to make it fall still lower, bewailing the necessity of having to search for it with my hands.

What a martyrdom for an amorous man to have to conceal his bliss at such a moment!

I did not let Armelline have any occasion to accuse me of taking too much licence, for I touched her alabaster spheres only so much as was absolutely necessary.

When I had got the oyster again, I could restrain myself no more, but affixed my lips to one of the blossoms of her breast. She was astonished, but evidently moved. When she marked my dreamy, languorous gaze, she asked if it gave me much pleasure to play the part of an infant.

"Yes, dearest," I replied, "but it's only an innocent jest."

"I don't think so and I hope you will say nothing about it to the Superioress. It may be innocent for you, but it is not for me, as I experienced sensations which must partake of the nature of sin. We will pick up no more oysters."

"These are mere trifles," said Emilie, "the stain of which will easily wipe out with a little holy water. At all events, we can swear there has been no kissing between us."

They went into the next room for a moment and, after I had done likewise, we then sat on the sofa before the fire. As I sat between them, I remarked that our legs were perfectly alike and that I could not imagine why women stuck so obstinately to their petticoats. As I talked, I touched their legs, saying it was just as if I were to touch my own. They did not interrupt this examination, which I carried as far as the knees, and I told Emilie that all the reward I would ask was that I might see her thighs, to compare them with Armelline's.

"She will be bigger than I," said Armelline, "though I am the taller."

"Well, there would be no harm in letting me see."

"I think there would."

"Well, I will feel with my hands."

"No, you would look at the same time."

"I swear I will not."

"Let me bandage your eyes."

"Certainly; but I will bandage yours, too."

"Yes; we will play at blindman's buff."

Before the bandaging began, I took care to make them swallow a good dose of punch and then we proceeded to play. I lifted the bandage and saw everything, but they pretended not to suspect anything.

This delightful game went on till exhausted. I then told them to take off their bandages. They did so and sat beside me, thinking perhaps that they would be able to disavow everything on the score of the bandage.

Armelline was meeker than her friend and her great eyes shone as voluptuously but more modestly. I would have snatched a kiss from her pretty mouth, but she turned away her head, though she squeezed my hands tenderly. I was astonished at this refusal after the liberties I had taken with her.

We had talked about balls, and they were both extremely anxious to see one. The public ball was the rage with all the young Romans. For ten long years, the Pope Rezzonico had deprived them of this pleasure. Although Rezzonico forbade dancing, he allowed gaming of every description. Ganganelli, his successor, had other views and forbade gaming, but allowed dancing.

So much for papal infallibility; what one condemns, the other approves. Ganganelli thought it better to let his subjects skip than to give them the opportunity of ruining themselves, committing suicide or becoming brigands; but Rezzonico did not see the matter in that light.

I promised the girls I would take them to the ball as soon as I could discover one where I was not likely to be recognised.

Three o'clock struck and I took them back to the convent, well enough pleased with the progress I had made, though I had only increased my passion. I was surer than ever that Armelline was born to exercise an irresistible sway over every man who owed fealty to beauty.

I was amongst her liegemen and am so still, but the incense is all gone, and the censor of no value.

I could not help reflecting on the sort of glamour which made me fall in love with one who seemed all new to me, while I loved her in exactly the same manner as I had loved her predecessor. But, in reality, there was no real novelty; the play was the same, though the title might be altered.

But when I had won what I coveted, did I realise that I was going over old ground? Did I complain? Did I think myself deceived? Not one whit and doubtless for this reason, that, whilst I enjoyed the play, I kept my eyes fixed on the title which had so taken my fancy.

If this be so, of what use is a title at all? The title of a book, the name of a dish, the name of a town—of what consequence are all these, when what one wants is to read the book, eat the dish, and see the town?

The comparison is a sophism. Man becomes amorous through the senses, which, touch excepted, all reside in the head. In love, a beautiful

face is a matter of the greatest moment. A beautiful female body might well excite a man to carnal indulgence, even though the head were covered, but never to real love. If, at the moment of physical delight, the covering were taken away and a face of hideous, revolting ugliness disclosed, one would fly in horror, in spite of all the beauties of the woman's body.

But the contrary does not hold good. If a man has fallen in love with a sweet, enchanting face and succeeds in lifting the veil of the sanctuary, only to find deformities there, still the face wins the day, atones for all.

The face is thus paramount, and hence it has come to be agreed that women's bodies shall be covered and their faces disclosed, while men's clothes are arranged in such a way that women can easily guess at what they cannot see.

This arrangement is undoubtedly to the advantage of women, art can conceal the imperfections of the face and even make it appear beautiful, but no cosmetic can dissemble an ugly breast, stomach or other part of the human body.

In spite of this, I confess that the Phenomerides of Sparta were in the right, like all women who, though they possess a fine figure, have a repulsive face, for, in spite of the beauty of the play, the title drives spectators away. Still, an interesting face is an inseparable accident of love.

Thrice happy are they who, like Armelline, have beauty of both face and body in exact proportion.

When I got home, I was so fortunate as to find Margarita in a deep sleep. I took care not to awake her and went to bed with as little noise as possible. I was in want of rest, for I no longer enjoyed the vigour of youth, and I slept till twelve.

When I awoke, Margarita told me that a handsome young man had called on me at ten o'clock, and that she had amused him till eleven, not daring to awake me.

"I made him some coffee," said she, "and he was pleased to pronounce it excellent. He would not tell me his name, but he will come again to-morrow. He gave me a piece of money, but I hope you will not mind. I don't know how much it is worth."

I guessed that it was the Florentine. The piece was of two ounces. I only laughed for, not loving Margarita, I was not jealous of her. I told her she had done quite right to amuse him and to accept the piece, which was worth forty-eight pauls. She kissed me affectionately and, thanks to this incident, I heard nothing about my having come home so late.

I felt curious to learn more about this generous Tuscan, so I proceeded to read Leonilda's letter.

His name, it appeared, was M—. He was a rich merchant, established in London, and had been commended to her husband by a Knight of Malta. Leonilda said he was generous, good-hearted and polished, and assured me I would like him.

After telling me the family news, Leonilda concluded by saying that she was in a fair way to become a mother and that she would be perfectly happy if she gave birth to a son. She begged me to congratulate the marquis.

Whether from a natural instinct or the effects of prejudice, this news made me shudder. I answered her letter in a few days, enclosing it in a letter to the marquis, in which I told him that the grace of God was never too late and that I had never been so much pleased by any news as at hearing he was likely to have an heir.

In the following May, Leonilda gave birth to a son, whom I saw in Prague on the occasion of the coronation of Leopold. He called himself Marquis C—, like his father—or perhaps we had better say, like his mother's husband, who attained the age of eighty. Though the young marquis did not know my name, I got introduced to him and had the pleasure of meeting him a second time at the theatre. He was accompanied by a priest, who was called his tutor, but such an office was a superfluity for him, who was wiser at twenty than most men are at sixty.

I was delighted to see that the young man was the living image of the old marquis. I shed tears of joy as I thought how this likeness must have pleased the old man and his wife, and I admired this chance, which seemed to have abetted Nature in her deceit. I wrote to my dear Leonilda, placing the letter in the hands of her son. She did not get it till the Carnival of 1792, when the young marquis returned to Naples, and a short time after I received an answer, inviting me to her son's marriage and begging me to spend the remainder of my days with her. Who knows? I may eventually do so.

I called on the Princess Santa-Croce at three o'clock and found her in bed, with the cardinal reading to her.

The first question she asked me was, why I had left the opera at the end of the second act.

"Princess, I can tell you an interesting history of my six hours of adventures, but you must give me a free hand, for some of the episodes must be told strictly after nature."

"Is it anything in the style of Sister M— M—?" asked the cardinal.

"Yes, my lord, something of the kind."

"Princess, will you be deaf?" asked His Eminence.

"Of course I will," she replied.

I then told my tale, almost as I have written it. The slipping oysters and the game of blindman's buff made the princess burst with laughing, in spite of her affected deafness. She agreed with the cardinal that I had acted with great discretion, and told me I would surely succeed on the next attempt.

"In three or four days," said the cardinal, "you will have the dispensation and then Emilie can marry whom she likes."

The next morning the Florentine came to see me at nine o'clock and I found him to answer to the marchioness's description, but I

had a bone to pick with him and was none the better pleased when he began asking me about the young person in my box at the theatre; he wanted to know whether she was married or engaged, if she had father, mother or any other relatives. I smiled sardonically and begged to be excused giving him the required information, as the young lady was masked when he saw her. He blushed and begged my pardon.

I thanked him for doing Margarita the honour of accepting a cup of coffee from her hands and begged him to take one with me, saying I would breakfast with him next morning. He lived at Roland's opposite St. Charles, where Madame Gabrielli, the famous singer (nicknamed *la Coghetta*) lived; Prince Baptiste Borghese was paying assiduous court to her.

As soon as the Florentine was gone, I went to St. Paul's in hot haste, for I longed to see what reception I should have from the two vestals I had initiated so well.

When they appeared, I noticed a great change. Emilie had become gay, while Armelline looked sad.

I told the former she would have her dispensation in three days and her warrant for four hundred crowns in a week.

"At the same time," I added, "you shall have your grant of two hundred crowns."

At these happy tidings she ran to tell the Superioress of her good fortune.

As soon as I was alone with Armelline, I took her hands and covered them with kisses, begging her to resume her wonted gaiety.

"What shall I do here," said she, "without Emilie? What shall I do when you are gone? I am unhappy, I love myself no longer."

She shed tears which pierced me to the heart. I swore I would not leave Rome till I had seen her married, with a dowry of a thousand crowns.

"I don't want a thousand crowns, but I hope you will get me married, as you say; if you do not keep your promise, it will kill me."

"I would die rather than deceive you; but you, on your side, must forgive my love, which perhaps made me go too far the other evening."

"I forgive you everything if you will remain my friend."

"I will; and now let me kiss your beautiful lips."

After this first kiss, which I took as a pledge of certain victory, she wiped away her tears and soon after Emilie reappeared, accompanied by the Superioress, who treated me with great cordiality.

"I hope you will take an interest in the new companion I am planning to give Armelline as soon as Emilie leaves us."

"I will do everything in my power," I replied. "And in return I hope you will allow me to take these young ladies to the theatre this evening."

"You will find them ready; how could I refuse you anything?"

When I was alone with the two friends, I apologised for having disposed of them without their consent.

"Our consent!" said Emilie. "We should be ungrateful, indeed, if we refused you anything after all you have done for us."

"And you, Armelline, will you withstand my love?"

"No; so long as it keeps within bounds. No more blindman's buff!"

"And it is such a nice game! You really grieve me."

"Well, invent another," said Emilie.

Emilie was becoming ardent, somewhat to my annoyance, for I was afraid Armelline would get jealous. I must not be charged with foppishness on this account. I knew the human heart.

When I left them, I went to the Torre-di-Nonna Theatre and took a box and then ordered a good supper at the same inn, not forgetting the oysters, though I felt sure I should not require their aid. I then called on a musician, whom I requested to get me three tickets for a ball where no one would be likely to know me.

I went home, with the idea of dining by myself, but I found a note from the Marchioness d'Août, reproaching me in a friendly manner for not having broken bread with her, and inviting me to dinner. I resolved to accept the invitation and, when I got to the house, I found the young Florentine already there. It was at this dinner that I discovered many of his good qualities and I saw that Donna Leonilda had not said too much in his favour.

Towards the end of the meal the marchioness asked why I had not stayed till the end of the opera.

"Because the young ladies were getting bored."

"I have found out that they do not belong to the Venetian ambassador's household."

"You are right and I hope you will pardon my small fiction."

"It was an impromptu effort to avoid telling me who they are, but they are known."

"Then I congratulate the curious."

"The one I addressed deserves to excite general curiosity; but, if I were in your place, I should make her use a little powder."

"I have not the authority to do so and, if I had, I would not trouble her for the world."

I was pleased with the Florentine, who listened to all this without saying a word. I got him to talk of England and of his business. He told me he was going to Florence, to take possession of his inheritance and get a wife to take back with him to London. As I left, I told him I could not have the pleasure of calling on him till the day after next, as I was prevented by important business. He told me I must come at dinner-time and I promised to do so.

Full of love and hope, I went for my two friends, who enjoyed the whole play without any interruption.

When we alighted at the inn, I told the coachman to call for me at two and we then went up to the third floor, where we sat before the fire while the oysters were being opened. They did not interest us as they had done before.

Emilie had an important air; she was about to make a good marriage.

Armelline was meek, smiling and affectionate and reminded me of the promise I had given her. I replied with ardent kisses, which reassured her, while they warned her that I would fain increase the responsibility I had already contracted towards her. However, she seemed resigned and I sat down to table in a happy frame of mind.

As Emilie was on the eve of her wedding, she no doubt put down my neglect of her to my respect for the sacrament of matrimony.

When supper was over, I got on the sofa with Armelline and spent three hours which might have been delicious if I had not obstinately endeavoured to obtain the utmost favour. She would not give in; all my supplications and entreaties could not move her; she was sweet, but firm. She lay in my arms, but would not grant what I wanted, though she gave me no harsh or positive refusal.

It seems a puzzle, but in reality it is quite simple.

She left my arms a virgin, sorry perhaps that her sense of duty had not allowed her to make me completely happy.

At last, Nature bade me cease, in spite of my love, and I begged Armelline to forgive me. My instinct told me that this was the only way by which I might obtain her consent another time.

Half merry and half sad, we awoke Emilie, who was fast asleep, and then we started. I went home and got into bed, not troubling myself about the storm of abuse with which Margarita greeted me.

The Florentine gave me a delicious dinner, overwhelmed me with protestations of friendship and offered me his purse if I needed it.

He had seen Armelline and had been pleased with her. I had answered him sharply when he questioned me about her, and ever since he had never mentioned her name. I felt grateful to him and as if I must make him some return. I asked him to dinner and had Margarita to dine with us. Not caring for her, I should have been glad if he had fallen in love with her; there would have been no difficulty, I believe, on her part and certainly not on mine; but nothing came of it. She admired a trinket which hung from his watch-chain, and he begged my permission to give it her. I told him to do so by all means and that should have been enough, but the affair went no farther.

In a week all the arrangements for Emilie's marriage had been made. I gave her her grant and the same day she was married and went away with her husband to Civit  Vechia. Menicuccio, whose name I have not mentioned for some time, was well pleased with my relations with his sister, foreseeing advantages for himself, and still better pleased with the turn his own affairs were taking, for three days after Emilie's wedding he married his lady-love and set up in a satisfactory manner.

When Emilie was gone, the Superioress gave Armelline a new companion. She was only a few years older than my sweetheart and very pretty; but she did not arouse a strong interest in my breast. When violently in love, no other woman has ever had much power over me.

The Superioress told me her name was Scholastica and that she was well worthy of my esteem, being, as she said, as good as Emilie.

She expressed a hope that I would do my best to help Scholastica marry a man whom she knew and who was in a good position. This man was the son of a cousin of Scholastica. She called him her nephew, though he was older than she. The dispensation could easily be had for money but, if it was to be had for nothing, I should have to find someone to ask it of the Holy Father. I promised I would do my best in the matter.

The carnival was drawing to a close and Scholastica had never seen an opera or a play. Armelline wanted to see a ball and I had at last succeeded in finding one where it seemed unlikely I should be recognised. However, it would have to be carefully managed, as serious consequences might ensue, so I asked the two friends if they would wear men's clothes, to which they agreed very heartily.

I had taken a box at the Aliberti Theatre for the day after the ball, so I told the two girls to obtain the necessary permission from the Superioress.

Though Armelline's resistance and the presence of her new friend discouraged me, I procured everything requisite to transform them into two handsome lads.

As Armelline got into the carriage, she gave me the bad news that Scholastica knew nothing about our relations and that we must be careful what we did before her. I had no time to reply, for Scholastica got in and we drove off to the inn. When we were seated in front of a good fire, I told them that, if they liked, I would go into the next room, in spite of the cold. So saying, I showed them their disguises, and Armelline said it would do if I turned my back, appealing to Scholastica to confirm her.

"I will do as you like," said she, "but I am very sorry to be in the way. You are in love with each other and here am I, preventing you from giving one another marks of your affection. Why don't you treat me with confidence? I am not a child and I am your friend."

These remarks showed me that she had plenty of common sense, and I breathed again.

"You are right, fair Scholastica," I said. "I do love Armelline, but she does not love me and refuses to make me happy, on one pretence or another."

With these words, I left the room and, after shutting the door behind me, proceeded to make a fire in the second apartment.

In a quarter of an hour Armelline knocked at the door and begged me to open it. She was in her breeches and said they needed my assistance, as their shoes were so small they could not get them on. I was in rather a sulky humour, so she threw her arms round my neck, and covered my face with kisses, which soon restored me to myself. While I was explaining the reason of my ill temper and kissing whatever I could see, Scholastica burst out laughing.

"I was sure I was in the way," said she, "and, if you do not trust me, I warn you I will not go with you to the opera to-morrow."

"Well, then, embrace him," said Armelline.

"With all my heart."

I did not much care for Armelline's generosity, but I embraced Scholastica as warmly as she deserved. Indeed, I would have done so if she had been less pretty, for such kindly consideration deserved a reward. I even kissed her more ardently than I need have done, with the idea of punishing Armelline, but I made a mistake, she was delighted and kissed her friend affectionately, as if in gratitude.

I made them sit down and tried to pull on their shoes but soon found out that they were much too small and that we must get some others.

I called the waiter who attended us and told him to go and fetch a bootmaker with an assortment of shoes.

In the meanwhile I would not be contented with merely kissing Armelline. She dared neither grant nor refuse and, as if to relieve herself of any responsibility, made Scholastica submit to all the caresses I lavished on her. The latter seconded my efforts with an ardour that would have pleased me exceedingly if I had been in love with her. She was exceedingly beautiful, and her features were as perfectly chiselled as Armelline's, but Armelline was possessed of a delicate and subtle charm of feature peculiar to herself.

I liked the amusement well enough, but there was a drop of bitterness in all my enjoyment. I thought it was plain that Armelline did not love me and that Scholastica was encouraging me only to encourage her friend.

At last, I came to the conclusion that I should do well to attach myself to the one who seemed likely to give me the completest satisfaction. As soon as I conceived this idea, I felt curious to see whether Armelline would show any jealousy if I appeared to be really in love with Scholastica and if the latter pronounced me too daring, for hitherto my hands had not crossed the Rubicon of their waistbands.

I was just getting to work when the shoemaker arrived, and in a few minutes the girls were well fitted. They put on their coats, and I saw two handsome young men before me, while their figures hinted their sex sufficiently to make a third person jealous of my good fortune.

I gave order for supper to be ready at midnight and we went to the ball. I would have wagered a hundred to one that no one would recognise me there, as the man who got the tickets had assured me it was a gathering of small tradesmen. But who can trust to fate or chance?

We went into the hall and the first person I saw was the Marchioness d'Août, with her husband and her inseparable abbé.

No doubt I turned a thousand colours, but it was no good going back, for the marchioness had recognised me, so I composed myself and went up to her. We exchanged the usual compliments of polite society, to which she added some good-natured, though ironical, remarks on my two young friends. Not being accustomed to company, they stood there, embarrassed and speechless.

But the worst of all was to come. A tall young lady who had just finished a minuet came up to Armelline, dropped a curtsy and asked

her to dance. In this young lady I recognised the Florentine, who had disguised himself as a girl and looked a very beautiful one. Armelline thought she would not appear as a dupe and said she recognised him.

"You are mistaken," said he, calmly. "I have a brother who is very like me, just as you have a sister who is your living portrait. My brother had the pleasure of exchanging a few words with her at the Capronica."

The Florentine's cleverness made the marchioness laugh and I had to join in her mirth, though I felt little inclination to do so.

Armelline begged to be excused from dancing, so the marchioness made her sit between the handsome Florentine and herself. The marquis took possession of Scholastica and I had to be attentive to the marchioness without seeming to be aware of the existence of Armelline, to whom the Florentine was talking earnestly.

I felt as jealous as a tiger and, having to conceal my rage under an air of perfect satisfaction, the reader may imagine how well I enjoyed the ball.

However, there was more anxiety in store for me, for presently I noticed Scholastica leave the marquis and go aside with a middle-aged man, with whom she conversed in an intimate manner.

The minuets over, the square dances began and I thought I was dreaming when I saw Armelline and the Florentine taking their places. I came up to congratulate them and asked Armelline gently if she was sure of the steps.

"This gentleman says I have only to imitate him and that I cannot possibly make any mistakes."

I had nothing to say to this, so I went towards Scholastica, feeling very curious to know who was her companion.

As soon as she saw me, she introduced me to him, saying timidly that this was the nephew of whom she had spoken, the same that wished to marry her.

I was surprised but did not let it appear. I told him that the Superioress had spoken of him to me and that I was thinking over the ways and means of obtaining a dispensation without any expence. He was an honest-looking man and thanked me heartily, commending himself to my good offices, as he said he was far from rich.

I left them together, and, on turning to view the dance, I was astonished to see that Armelline was dancing admirably and executing all the figures. The Florentine seemed a finished dancer and they both looked very happy. I was far from pleased, but I congratulated them both on their performance. The Florentine had disguised himself so admirably that no one would have taken him for a man. It was the Marchioness d'Août who had been his costumer.

As I was too jealous to leave Armelline to her own devices, I refused to dance, preferring to watch her. I was not at all uneasy about Scholastica, who was with her betrothed.

About half-past eleven, the Marchioness d'Août, who was delighted with Armelline and possibly had her *protégé's* happiness in view, asked

me, in a tone that amounted to a command, to sup at her house, in company with my two companions.

"I cannot have the honour," I replied, "and my two companions know the reason."

"That is as much as to say," said the marchioness, turning to Armelline as she spoke, "that he will do as you please."

I addressed myself to Armelline and observed smilingly that she knew perfectly well that she must be home by half-past twelve at latest.

"True," she replied, "but you can do as you please."

I replied somewhat sadly that I did not feel myself at liberty to break my word, but that she could make me do even that if she chose. Thereupon the marchioness, her husband, the abbé and the Florentine urged her to use her power to make me break my supposed word and Armelline actually began to presume to do so. I was bursting with rage but, making up my mind to do anything rather than appear jealous, I said simply that I would gladly consent if her friend would do the same.

"Very well," said she, with a pleased air that cut me to the quick, "go and ask her."

That was enough for me. I went to Scholastica and told her the circumstances, in the presence of her lover, begging her to refuse without compromising me. Her lover said I was perfectly right, but Scholastica required no persuasion, telling me that she had quite made up her mind not to sup with anyone. She came with me and I told her to speak to Armelline aside before saying anything to the others.

I led Scholastica before the marchioness, bemoaning my want of success. Scholastica told Armelline that she wanted to say a few words to her aside and after a short conversation they came back looking sorry and Armelline told the marchioness that she found it would be impossible for them to come. The lady did not press us any longer, so we went away. I told Scholastica's intended to keep to himself what had passed and asked him to dine with me on the day after Ash Wednesday.

The night was dark, and we walked to the place where I had ordered the carriage to be in waiting.

To me it was as if I had come out of Hell, and on the way to the inn I did not speak a word, not even answering the questions which the too simple Armelline addressed to me in a voice that would have softened a heart of stone. Scholastica avenged me by reproaching her for having obliged me to appear either rude or jealous or a breaker of my word.

When we got to the inn, Armelline changed my jealous rage into pity; her eyes swam with tears which Scholastica's homely truths had drawn forth.

The supper was ready, so they had no time to change their dress. I was rather sad but could not bear to see Armelline sad also. I

resolved to do my best to drive away her melancholy, even though I suspected that it arose from her love of the Florentine.

The supper was excellent and Scholastica did honour to it, while Armelline, contrary to her wont, scarcely touched a thing. Scholastica was charming; she embraced her friend and urged her to share in her own happiness, as I had become the friend of her betrothed and she was sure that I would do as much for her as I had done for Emilie. She blessed the ball and the chance which had brought him there. In short, she did her best to show Armelline that, with my love, she had no reason to be sad.

Armelline dared not disclose the true cause of her sadness. The fact was that she wanted to get married and the handsome Florentine was the man to her liking.

Our supper came to an end and still Armelline was gloomy. She drank only one glass of punch and, as she had eaten so little, I would not try to make her drink more, lest it do her harm. Scholastica, on the other hand, took such a fancy to this agreeable fluid, which she was tasting for the first time, that she drank deeply and was amazed to find it mounting to her head instead of descending to her stomach. In this pleasant state she felt it was her duty to reconcile Armelline and myself and assure us that we might be as tender as we liked without minding her presence.

Getting up from table and standing with some difficulty, she carried her friend to the sofa and caressed her in such a way that Armelline could not help laughing, despite her sadness. Then she called me and placed her in my arms. I caressed her and Armelline, though she did not repulse me, did not respond as Scholastica had hoped. I was not disappointed; I did not think it likely she would grant now what she had refused to grant when I held her in my arms for those hours whilst Emilie was asleep.

However, Scholastica began to reproach me with my coldness, though I deserved no blame at all on this score. I told them to take off their men's clothes and dress as women. I helped Scholastica to take off her coat and waistcoat and then aided Armelline in a similar manner. When I brought them their chemises, Armelline told me to go and stand by the fire and I did so.

Before long a noise of kissing made me turn round and I saw Scholastica, on whom the punch had taken effect, devouring Armelline with kisses. At last, this treatment had the desired result; Armelline became gay and gave as good as she got. At this sight, the blood boiled in my veins and, running to them, I found Scholastica was not ill-pleased that I should embrace her ardently.

Armelline was ashamed to appear less generous than her friend and Scholastica was triumphant when she saw the result. Armelline, as was her wont, called on her friend to take her turn.

It was difficult to decide which of the two deserved to carry off the apple. Scholastica was, strictly speaking, the more beautiful of the two, but I loved Armelline and love casts a glamour over the beloved object.

Scholastica appeared to me to be as pure a virgin as Armelline and I saw that I might do what I liked with her. But I would not abuse my liberty, not caring to admit how powerful an ally the punch had been.

However, I did all in my power to give her pleasure. Scholastica was glutted with voluptuous enjoyment and was certain that I had eluded her desires only from motives of delicacy.

I took them back to the convent, assuring them that I would take them to the opera the next evening. I went to bed, doubtful whether I had gained a victory or sustained a defeat, and it was not till I awoke that I was in a position to give a decided opinion.

CHAPTER 139*

AFTER the opera of Shrove Sunday, Armelline, excited by Scholastica's example, abandons herself to my tenderness; I enjoy their company for the last time on the final day of the carnival, after having been on the race-course, dressed as Pierrot, supposing that no one would know me. Now this is what takes place: I come to a standstill before the triumphal car; I see with surprise a mask, disguised as a warrior in the costume of the ancient Romans, put his left hand on my horse's reins and, with his right, hand a pen and piece of paper to a masked woman in a queen's disguise who is near him. The queen writes, gives back the paper to the warrior, who gives it to me and at the same time lets go my horse's reins. At the same moment a musical prelude is heard and all the masks in the car hurl handfuls of confits at me. They then fall in with the advance of the march. I read the note, expecting nothing but an ordinary pamphlet; I am surprised when I read these lines:

*Pierrot audacieux, tremble. Voici ton sort:
Je t'ai sauvé de Muran à Venise;
Mais cette nuit, je te condamne à mort,
Tu rendras l'âme en changeant de chemise.*

I guessed in the first place that the warrior could only have been Cardinal de Bernis and that the queen could have been none other than his lovely Princess Santa-Croce. Only the cardinal could have reminded me of certain events which had happened seventeen years before. The impromptu could have been only his.

I leave the Corso, I go to the door of a café and write the following four verses; then I return to the Corso and give them to the queen:

*Je signe à ta sentence, adorable déesse;
Mais de ma mort laisse-moi, douce, le choix.
Mon crime, en bon chrétien, au guerrier je confesse;
J'expirerai content, mais sur la Sainte Croix.*

*One of the missing chapters discovered by Mr Arthur Symons among the Casanova MSS. at Dux and translated by him

On the second day of Lent I received from the Lady Superior of the convent all the papers necessary to me for the marriage of Scholastica and the princess and the cardinal arranged so that she left the convent soon after Easter, when she was married.

On the first Sunday of Lent the Marquise d'Août asked me to dine with the Florentine, who, declaring his good intentions towards Armeline, had no difficulty in persuading me to become the principal person who in this affair would take the place of her father. He gave her a dowry of ten thousand Roman crowns, which he deposited in the bank of Saint-Esprit, and after Easter he espoused her. Then he took her with him to Florence and from Florence to England, where she is living happily.

It was on this occasion that I presented myself to the Cardinal Orsini, who, being *Prince de l'Académie des Inféconds*, did me the honour of making me one of its members. He urged me to recite an ode in honour of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the first meeting, which would take place on Good Friday. In order to compose this ode, I determined to spend some days in the country. I chose Frascati, where I imagined I could find solitude. I had promised Mariuccia I would go to see her. She had assured me I would be delighted to make the acquaintance of her family, and this made me curious. I left Rome three weeks before Easter; I arrived that evening at Frascati and the next day, having sent for a wig-maker, I saw before me Mariuccia's husband, who recognised me on the instant.

After having told me that he was a corn-dealer and prosperous in his business and that he had adopted the wig-maker's trade only for his own pleasure, he offered me a room in his house and very modestly invited me to dinner. I was extremely surprised when he said that he would introduce me to my daughter, whom he had baptised under the name of Jacomine. I thought it better not to admit this; I laughed at it, I told him the thing was not possible and he coolly replied that I would admit it when I saw her. I am now very curious; here is yet another intrigue that may have consequences, but, in any case, the girl could be only a child of nine or ten and my quality of father must be extremely doubtful, for the barber had espoused Mariuccia four weeks after the first tender intercourse I had had with her.

But at noon I was struck with the beauty of her face. She had all my features, beautified, and she was much lovelier than Sophie I had of Thérèse Pompéati, whom I left in London.

Jacomine was very tall for her age and very well made. I had only glanced at her sideways, but I saw her, concentrated in her silence, examine me very attentively. I seized the earliest moment to ask Mariuccia on what ground her husband had been able to tell me that Jacomine was my daughter, and she replied, as if there was nothing unusual about it, that he was as sure of it as she and that this did not prevent him loving her more than all his other children.

"But the little girl doesn't know that she's not the daughter of your husband?"

"Certainly not. One never confides such secrets as these to children "

I found Mariuccia's house exceedingly clean and, the room that her husband, Clement, offered me having pleased me, I let him have my luggage brought from the inn.

Mariuccia warned me, when we were together, that I was to dine with an unmarried woman called Signora Veronica, who kept a school of drawing, in which Jacomine studied, making extraordinary progress.

"This woman," said she to me, "will come with what she calls her niece, who's jolly and very clever, a great friend of Jacomine's. She is thirteen years old. Her aunt knew you, but she knew your brother Zanetto much better. We have spoken a lot about you and she will be agreeably surprised when she meets you."

She certainly was so when she saw me, though not more than I when I saw her niece, whose likeness to my brother could not have been more indiscreet. I divined all. Madame Veronica, seated beside me at the table, after having assured me that the girl was the daughter of a sister of hers who was dead, said to me during dessert that I might have been her brother-in-law if my brother had been a man of honour. She could not have said more to make me conjecture that the pretended niece was her daughter and that I was her uncle. No sooner had I heard this than I was determined to love this niece and what I found droll and extraordinary was that I found myself set on this light love by a kind of revengeful spirit. I leave to physicians who are more learned than I the interpretation of phenomena of this kind. My jolly niece was called Guillemine and throughout dinner I did not fail to find her charming. Jacomine spoke but little but seemed to be thinking deeply. After dinner I went alone for a walk in the Villa Lodovisi.

What reflections came to me when I saw myself in the very spot where twenty-seven years before I had been with Donna Lucrezia! I saw the spot and thought it more beautiful than ever, while not only did I find myself no longer the same, but less in all my faculties, experience excepted—the which I abused, and which compensated me for nothing, save to put me in a better position for reasoning.

Miserable gain! Reasoning led me to sadness, pitiless mother of the frightful thought of death that I was not strong enough to face as a Stoic. Strength beyond my strength, that I have never been able to attain and that I never shall attain. This weakness has never made me a coward but, loathing all the same its cause, I could never understand how a thinking man could remain indifferent to it.

I put aside these sombre ideas, as I always did, reflecting that, La Corticelli excepted, I had given happiness to all the girls I had loved. Lucie de Paséan had come to a shameful end because, from a sense of propriety, I had respected her. She became the prey of a vile rake, who only led her to the edge of a precipice.

At twilight I went home and remained in my room till the hour for supper. I spent four hours vainly endeavouring to begin my ode on The Redemption I had promised to write for the Cardinal Orsini. The ode is a form of composition which does not depend on the poet's will.

It cannot emerge from his head nor from his pen unless Apollo inspires him. Now, Apollo derided me, for, as I invoked him, I thought of Guillemine, whose God never troubled himself about her. I supped with Clement, whose wife was big with child; he hoped for a boy. I could only wish that he might not be disappointed.

He left me alone with his wife and this was a great compliment, but at that moment I found her too common. I spent a very agreeable hour, but merely in conversation. Mariuccia was full of her happiness and, thinking she owed it me, she might prevent herself from loving the author of her happiness, but not from adoring him. These are natural sentiments, costing nothing, but in the greater is the less. I could see Mariuccia at my disposal; but I wanted only Guillemine. Mariuccia told me the aunt had left her with Jacomine. "They are up there," she said, "lying in the same bed. I am sure they are sleeping deeply; would you like us to go up and see them? Come along; but they must not be awakened."

I go up on tiptoe. I see two beds: in one, sleep her two youngest daughters; in the other, I see Guillemine and my daughter, both asleep on their backs, both jolly and flushed with the roses that often glow on the cheeks of a young girl or boy only in their sleep. The coverlet left bare the young virgins' breasts. My daughter's were unfurnished; but the other's were like the swellings one sees on the head of a calf, on the eve of growing its horns. Neither their forearms nor their hands could be seen. What a vision! What fascination! Mariuccia laughed at my admiration.

I was the first to leave the room and she went to bed with her husband.

I woke at dawn and laughed as I thought of my ode. I found myself the slave of Guillemine. I could have made verses only to her. Cupid defied with flights of arrows a sad Apollo who had been able to do nothing but unstring his bow with the lugubrious subject matter of the death of the Creator. At the moment when Clement was doing my hair, the two charming girls entered. Jacomine brought me my chocolate on a saucer, the other had in her hands a sketchbook, which contained drawings. On both their faces the marks of gaiety were enlivened by innocence, candour and confidence. If they had known what had overtaken them during the night, they would not have dared to appear before me. Guillemine would have been inconsolable, had she been told that, in consequence of what I had seen, I had fallen madly in love with her.

The earliest sentiment of a girl with any germ of wit is the game of coquetry; it is the only one she values, for it is the only one that ensures her lover's constancy. At her age Guillemine would have hated me, had she known that, as far as my eyes were concerned, I had already become her master, in spite of herself. As for my daughter, at the age of nine her ideas would not be so ripe. I begged them to let me see the productions of their crayons.

After showing some slight reluctance, they handed over the book. Nearly all the figures were naked—men, women, statues, groups of chil-

dren—all pretty, all copied from excellent academies. Apollo Belvedere, Antinous, Hercules and the Venus of Titian reclining, with her hand just where I had seen the hands of these good girls. The phenomenon of the soul that I saw at this moment and that gave me the greatest pleasure was a dispute between Guillelmine and my daughter.

My daughter would not allow that I should stop and study this Venus and Guillelmine laughed at her. She contended that I should not stop to examine Antinous or Apollo, because, being a man, I could find nothing new in these drawings and, moreover, they should not allow it to be known that they had drawn them. The pleasure that this dispute gave me overwhelmed my soul; but I was embarrassed when they elected me arbiter of their opinions.

"I don't know," I told them at last, "which of you two is right; but, if I consult the pleasure your drawings give me, I shall say that Venus interests me more than Antinous.

The amusing part of it was that each believed she had won the victory, only Guillelmine would not listen to a fuller explanation. Throughout my life I have given the utmost importance to these trifles, which served to trace the way by which I came to penetrate the hearts of those whose conquest I desired.

They went to school and, as soon as I was dressed, I went and visited Signora Veronica. I saw in her house seven or eight girls, all very young. Not one of these could divert me from Guillelmine. So that I might find some reason for going often to this school, I begged the mistress to paint my portrait in miniature; not being rich, she seemed overwhelmed with the idea of earning six sequins and the next day I promised six other sequins to Guillelmine if she would do my portrait in crayon in dressing-gown and nightcap. By reason of this she had to come to my room very early. The next day, as she made me wait too long, Jacomine said that she must stay in bed with her; her mother Mariuccia agreed to it and her aunt made no difficulty about consenting. From that moment I hoped everything. On the fourth day of my sojourn at Frascati, Guillelmine came alone to sup with us and, so as to banish all feelings of jealousy from the head of my dear Jacomine, I had bought from her father a gold watch with a clasp, which I gave her after supper. The little soul was wild with joy; with gratitude as an only excuse, she indulged in a hundred endearments, which I had some difficulty in receiving with a fatherly demeanour. The whole town was whispering that I was certainly her father and Mariuccia and her husband were not sorry folk believed it. Jacomine guessed it, but she didn't know what to make of the ideas floating in her head. She began, putting aside my forbiddance, to come into my bed after I had retired, and to scoff at clear-sighted Guillelmine, who did not dare to do as much. I gave my daughter only tender kisses on her lovely eyes and mouth in the presence of Guillelmine, who laughed at this kind of trifling. I said to her carelessly that the four years' difference between them was nothing and that I would treat her none the less as a child if she were in Jacomine's place. This kind of disregard at last had the effect it was

bound to have at the end of three or four days. I gave her six sequins for her drawing her aunt retouched and the same night she was beside me in my bed on one side of me, Jacomine on the other. In the morning, before they went to school, they told Mariuccia in my presence the way in which they had teased me in my bed before they retired to their room. The wise woman laughed, knowing where the affair would end.

Three or four days later Jacomine fell asleep, or pretended to and Guillelmine a few minutes after did the same up to a certain point, when she thought it best to awaken. The content she saw me in seemed to her so tranquil that she thought it in her interest to complain of nothing. She wanted to make me believe, that being asleep, she had not perceived the least thing and, after having awakened Jacomine, they went away together; but the following morning I gave her a jolly ring worth more than fifty Roman crowns, which induced her aunt that very night at supper to thank me. The drawing once finished, she proposed to take the girl home with her, which terrified me. My daughter with many tears opposed this project, so that Signora Veronica gave way to her and, laughing, said to me that I had every reason for loving her niece—the same reason, she went on, that Jacomine had for loving her. She thought she had invented an insoluble enigma.

After she had gone, the young girls, left alone with me, let themselves be tempted by another punch and, after having seen me in bed, came to tease me, they said. But, when my daughter at once fell asleep in good earnest, I was not base enough to allow for the second time this stratagem to be employed with my dear Guillelmine. I saw clearly that I could count on her tenderness and I was not wrong. But herewith a very happy event, like so many others, that made me superstitious.

The next day at table Mariuccia called to my memory the happiness she had in Rome when she gave me a number that I had played and which, when it came up, won for the whole family. Jacomine said she had a number she was sure of and, without waiting to be asked what number it was, she named "twenty-seven." Mariuccia exclaimed aloud, remembering as well as I that the number she had given me ten years before that time was twenty-seven.

Nothing more was needed; I said I wanted to play it at once; Clement said we could no longer play at Frascati, that we would have to descend to Rome to play. The lottery was to take place the next day but one. I order that a safe man be sent at once to Rome, and Clement says he will go himself. I encourage him and he goes forthwith to order a horse and dresses like a courier.

First of all I write down the twenty-seven, divided into five partners, per single numbers of twenty-five Roman crowns. The partners were Mariuccia, Clement, Jacomine, Guillelmine and Signora Veronica. I allow another twenty-five crowns for myself, giving orders that it be played for the second draw, giving fifty crowns to Clement, who leaves at once, promising to be back again by supper-time.

Mariuccia said she felt sure of winning, but my daughter looked sad.

"We shall win," she said to me, "but not you. Why should you expect this to come up second, rather than first, third, fourth or fifth?"

"Because I am pleased to believe wholly in Fortune. Because this is the second time I have been given the twenty-seven and because I wish to win five times as much as the rest of you."

"But it is five times more difficult. It seems to me as if you don't reason properly."

"If the twenty-seven turns up second drawing, I take you all to Rome and entertain you all Holy Week. Please God, it turns up!"

Clement was back by eleven and handed me over my stakes, keeping the other.

Guillelmine had become my good angel. Throughout the second night I found her so loving that I forgave my brother all his follies. I wished to find him still in Rome to give him proof of my gratitude and to thank him for having created this jewel for the consolation of my soul. Guillelmine sighed in my arms to think of the cruel moment when I should leave her. I thought I could promise to marry her if her aunt consented to it; she told me she was certain that her aunt would consent, but I was sure of the contrary. The poor little thing didn't know she was my brother's child.

But what pleasure the next day but one, when we saw published the five numbers of the Roman lottery! The second draw was the twenty-seven. Jacomine flung her arms round my neck and after her, the whole family. Signora Veronica came and struggled with her thanks. She saw herself by my instrumentality mistress of one hundred and fifty Roman crowns; Clement won two hundred and fifty crowns. I had won eight hundred and seventy-five and I could not be indifferent to this sum, for my exchequer after the carnival was nearly at its end.

The Roman crown is worth half a sequin. My daughter made the company laugh, asking me why I had played for the second draw for everybody. Clement came and embraced me and admitted that he had played the number himself, ten crowns for the second turn; I congratulated him sincerely. I then confirmed my promise to keep them in Rome through Holy Week. Signora Veronica excused herself on account of her school and Clement on account of his shop. The party was composed of Mariuccia, Jacomine, Guillelmine and myself and we left on Sunday at dawn.

What delight to see myself the object of the adoration of these three creatures! These good moments in my life made me a hundred times happier than the bad moments made me unhappy. I took them home, scoffing at Margarita, who sulked when I told her to ask her mother to put up two beds in the room adjoining mine, where Cerutti stayed. After having given orders to Margarita's mother for five to dinner and supper till the second day of Easter, I escorted them (in a carriage which I hired from the inkeeper Carlo Roland, father-in-law of Teresa, Giovanni Casanova's wife) to St. Peter's and all around during the course of the week. What calmed Margarita was the pleas-

ure I procured her of dining with me and she could find nothing to complain of when I said to her that during these eight days I could not let her come to my room after supper. I let her imagine that she who was coming to sleep with me was Signora Veronica. Seeing Jacomine, she had no difficulty in divining that she was my daughter and that I must have loved her mother ten years before that time. She imagined what she liked about Guillelmine. Mariuccia went to bed after supper and the two young girls came to my room, as they had done at Frascati. I spent eight delicious days, although at a high price, because I spent over four hundred sequins in clothes, linen and jewels of all kinds, not forgetting Signora Veronica, to whom Guillelmine took all the presents which I had bought for her.

It was on the night of Holy Thursday that I composed the ode I recited next day to the Assembly of the Barren, where I saw the Cardinal de Bernis and the Cardinal J.-Baptiste Rezzonico, who asked me to give him a copy of my ode, which I had recited by heart, pouring out a torrent of tears. All the Academicians wept. The only way to make people weep is to weep; but one must have sorrow depicted on a face which has the power of exciting emotion without making grimaces. I had it and the verses gave me and still give me the energy of the matter they contained. The Cardinal de Bernis, who knew my fashion of thinking, said to me four days after that he could never have believed I was so consummate an actor. I swore to him that at the moment I really felt myself to be in earnest and, having meditated over it for a while, he agreed that it might be so.

On the second day of Easter, I went back to Frascati with Mariuccia, my daughter and Guillelmine, whose despair rent my soul. I dined there, supped there and slept there for the last time and Signora Veronica seemed very much touched by my generosity when Guillelmine gave her all the presents I had reserved for her; but she made it very painful for me the next day, an hour before I left Frascati. She took me aside to assure me that, seeing how Guillelmine had wept, she could not help being certain that I had made the girl amorous and, after having put before my reason several very sad reflections, she made it a point of honour to ask me whether anything serious had happened between her and me. I assured her on my word of honour that her tears could not be derived from anything but her love born of gratitude—with which she seemed satisfied.

Can one make it a point of honour to ask an honourable man to reveal a secret that honour itself forbids him to reveal? God knows what I suffered from this cruel separation! All such separations are desperate and the last always seems worse than the former ones. I should have been dead a hundred times if God had not given me a soul that can easily take its own course and be quieted in the course of a few days. We must not call that forgetfulness. Forgetfulness comes from weakness; to quiet oneself by replacing what is gone comes out of strength that may be given a place among the virtues. Guillelmine, besides, was happy. She became four years after the wife

of a painter who is to-day distinguished. It was Clement who gave me tidings whenever I had the curiosity to write to him. He became rich and returned to Rome seven or eight years afterwards and went into business with a corn merchant, who espoused Jacomine; but this marriage was not happy. She became a widow at the age of twenty and left Rome with a count from Palermo, who married her after his wife's death.

CHAPTER 140 *

WHEN I left Venice in the year 1783, God ought to have sent me to Rome or Naples or Sicily or Parma, where my old age, according to all appearances, might have been happy. My genius, who is always right, led me to Paris, so that I might see my brother François, who had run into debt and was just then going to the Temple. I do not care whether or not he owes his regeneration to me but I am glad to have effected it. If he had been grateful to me, I should have felt myself repaid; it seems to me much better that he should carry on his shoulders the burden of his debt, which from time to time he ought to find heavy. He does not deserve a worse punishment. To-day, in the seventy-third year of my life, my only desire is to live in peace and to be far from any person who might imagine that he has rights over my moral liberty, for it is impossible that any kind of tyranny should not coincide with this imagination.

After the too lively party at Frascati, I spent six weeks in Rome, in the society of the Princess Santa-Croce, at my Academy of Arcades and without any new love affair. Margarita, who always made me laugh, sufficed.

About this time Father Stratico, who is now Bishop of Lesina and who had introduced me to the lovely Marquise Chiga at Siena, came to Rome to pass his examination as *maestro*. (This is the doctor's degree of the Dominican monks.) I had the pleasure of being present at the examination he had to pass in order to be approved Doctor in Theology. There were four examining theologians and the General of the Order was present. These monks, who are very rigorous, gave the candidate the most intricate arguments that exist in the whole of theology; it seemed to them they could not appear very learned to their General except by embarrassing the newly elected member, who, if he chanced to be more learned than they, ought to take great care to conceal this from them for, if they were to reject him, their sentence would be without appeal; and my reader knows, I think, the meaning of "Theological Science."

Being very curious in regard to this comic doctor and his comical degree, at which even Stratico laughed in secret, I went to see him in the morning, expecting to find him with St. Thomas Aquinas in hand, conferring with the *padrasses*; but, instead of this, I find him

* One of the missing chapters discovered by Mr. Arthur Symons among the Casanova MSS. at Dux and translated by him.

holding cards, attentive to the game of piquet against another monk and cursing his luck. "I believed," I say to him, "I should find you deep in study." He replies, "*Sponte studuisse.*"

I left, assuring him he would soon find me at his combat, where I should be much amused in hearing the arguments of the famous Memochi. Ah! how I suffered! The new candidate was not seated on the usual stool, but on a culprit's stool. He had to sum up the arguments *in forma* of his four executioners, whose principle was to make of their syllogisms a *vis major* that never ended. I found they were all in the wrong, they were all so absurd; but I congratulated them on the fact that I was not permitted to speak. Without being a theologian, I flattered myself I might have overwhelmed all of them simply with common sense; I was mistaken; common sense is alien to theology and principally to what is speculative; this Stratico proved to me theoretically the same day in a house where he took me to sup with him.

His brother, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Padua, arrived in Rome at the same time, coming from Naples with the young Chevalier de Morosini, whose tutor he was. He had broken one of his legs in the races the furious Morosini obliged him to attend; he came to Rome to finish his cure. The society of these Counts Stratico, two brothers, both honest men learned and unprejudiced, delighted me until they and I left Rome, where I had enjoyed myself, only I had spent too much. I went to Florence, after having taken leave of all my acquaintances and principally of the cardinal, who always hoped that Louis XV would recall him to Versailles.

Such is the fate of all men who, after having been ministers in a great court, find themselves reduced to live elsewhere, either without any position or with some commission which makes them dependent on the ministers who succeed them. There is no wealth, no philosophy in nature, no image of peace, quietude or any other happiness which could console them; they languish, they sigh, they live only in the hope that they may be recalled. So, in comparison, we shall find in history that the kings who have abdicated their thrones are much more numerous than the ministers who have voluntarily renounced their offices. This observation has made me much more often desire to be a minister than a king; one must believe that a ministry has inconceivable charms and I am curious about these charms, for I shall never know how to figure them clearly.

I left Rome at the beginning of June, 1771, entirely alone in my carriage, with four post-horses, well equipped, in perfect health and absolutely determined to adopt a course of life altogether different from that which I had followed up to that moment. Wearied and contented with the pleasures I had tasted for thirty years on end, I did not think of giving these up altogether, but in future merely to touch them lightly, defending myself against any consequent responsibility. With a view to this, I went to Florence without any letter of introduction, decided to see no one but to give myself up entirely to study.

Homer's *Iliad*, which, since I had left England, had delighted me intensely for an hour or two every day in its original language, made me desirous to translate it into Italian stanzas; it seemed to me that all its translations into Italian had ruined it, Salvini's excepted, which no one could read on account of its sterile aridity. I had the Scholiasts; I did justice to Pope's rhymed version, but I thought he ought to have said much more in his notes. Florence was the only city where it seemed to me I could occupy myself with my translation, keeping as far as I could from contact with the outer world.

Other circumstances urged me to make up my mind to this. It seemed to me I had grown old. Forty-six appeared to me a great age. I found the enjoyment of love less vivid, less seductive than I figured it to myself before the fact and my vitality had gradually diminished for the past eight years. I found that a long amorous combat was not followed by sound sleep and that my appetite at table, which love before that year had sharpened, had now become less, both when I loved impatiently and when I had enjoyed. Besides this, I found that I no longer interested the fair sex at first sight, that I had to speak, that certain women preferred my rivals to me, that some of them had a way of dispensing with me and secretly associating me with someone else; but I could no longer claim sacrifices. And lastly, I got impatient when I saw a young spark to whom the eagerness I showed for the object he loved gave no offence and when the same object, in showing me favour, wanted to make me pass for someone of no consequence. When they said of me, "He is a man of a certain age," I admitted it, but this truth annoyed me. All that in the moments when, being alone, I descended into myself, made me more convinced than ever that I ought to think of some hiding-place. I felt that I was constrained to do this, for I saw myself on the verge of having nothing more to live for, after having consumed my treasures. All the friends whose purses had been open for me were dead. M. Barbaro, who died that year of consumption, left me in his will only six miserable sequins a month for the rest of my life and M. Dandolo, who was the only friend that remained to me, could give me only another six sequins. Yet he was twenty years older than I. I had, when I left Rome, seven or eight hundred Roman crowns, my jewels in their boxes, my snuffboxes, my lovely and inexpensive rings, which did me more harm than good, for they made people believe I was rich and my ambition impelled me to spend in such a way that they should not appear to be mistaken. The knowledge of this truth made me take the wise precaution of being seen at Florence only simply dressed and without any ostentation. Having done this, I said to myself that, if the need of making money were to reduce me to the necessity of selling all my personal effects, no one would ever hear of it.

With this plan, I arrived in Florence in less than two days, without stopping on the way; I put up at an inn of no reputation and sent my carriage to the post-house because the innkeeper, J.-B. Allegranti,

had no room for it. On the next day, I went and had it put in a coach-house.

Fairly comfortable in a small room, finding the innkeeper modest and reasonable, seeing in the inn only ugly and old women, I thought I might live there quietly, where temptation would not be in the way.

The next morning I dressed in black, sword at hip, and went to the Pitti Palace to present myself to the archduke. This was Leopold, who died seven years ago, an emperor. He gave an audience to all who presented themselves, so I thought it my duty to go directly to him, without taking the trouble to go before then to the Count Rosemberg's. Desiring to live quietly in Tuscany, I thought that, to preserve myself from the misfortunes dependent on those who spy on one and from certain suspicions which are so natural to the police, I ought to present myself directly to the master. I went to the ante-room, where I wrote my own name after the others who were waiting their turn to have audience. A Marquis Pucci who was one of these and who had known me in Rome at a marquise's (I don't remember if she were born a Frescobaldi of Florence or if she were the widow of a marquis of the same name) came up to me and began to compliment me on the pleasure it gave him to see me again in Italy. He told me he had gone to Bologna with M—, who was returning to England with a young Roman wife who would eclipse the beauties of London. He told me he had accosted me because, while he was in Florence, he had heard many people speak of me and he had looked forward to seeing me after my return from Rome. I thanked him for the good news he gave me, because I was greatly interested in the happiness of this fine couple.

It would have vexed me if I had found Armelline still in Florence, for, still loving her, it would have been impossible for me to see her again in the possession of another without the greatest grief of soul. The reader must have perceived that, at the place where I spoke of her marriage with the generous and charming M—, I did not dwell upon any of the circumstances that followed it. The reason for this is that I have never had the strength to write down really any fact whose memory is sorrowful to me. The intrigue of the Marquise d'Août, the tears of Armelline, who was in love with the Florentine, and the word of honour I had given her that she would become his wife, when I required from her the last favours, under this condition humiliating for her and for me, were the powerful motives which compelled me to act against the interests of my heart. Having repented of my promise, I was obliged to offer my hand to Armelline in the presence of the Lady Superior, after having made her quite certain that I was not married. Armelline refused my offer, not so much by words as by tears, and a few words of Madame d'Août ended by degrading me—she asked me if I was in a position to give this excellent girl ten thousand Roman crowns.

This proud question brought me to reason, but with great grief in my soul. I then wrote to the Lady Superior and to Armelline her-

self, saying that I recognised my injustice and hoped she would forgive me the faults of my mind, on account of the passions which preoccupied me, wishing her all possible happiness with M—, who seemed to me much more mature and much more worthy of her than I. The only favour I asked of her was to excuse me from going to the wedding and this favour was granted, in spite of the insistence of the Marquise d'Août, who, treating all these lover-like feelings as trifles, claimed that persons of any wit should dispel their influence. The Princess of Santa-Croce also thought as she did, but the Cardinal de Bernis took my part, for he was more philosophical than François. The wedding took place at the Marquise's. Menicuccio was there with his wife, because Armelline had no other relatives in Rome.

It was with this grief that I had gone to Frascati, believing that it would increase my enthusiasm for the ode on *The Passions of the Man-God*; but my good genius had prepared for me a consolation of quite a different kind.

Vice is not a synonym of crime, for one may be vicious without being criminal. Such was I all my life and I dare even say that I was often virtuous in the actuality of vice, for it is true that all vice must be opposed to virtue, but it does not prejudice universal harmony. My vices have never burdened anyone but myself, excepting the cases in which I have seduced; but seductions were never characteristic of me, for I have never seduced unwittingly without being seduced myself.

The professional seducer, who plans it, is an abominable man—at bottom, the enemy of the object on which he has fixed his choice. He is a true criminal who, if he has the required qualities of seduction, makes himself unworthy of them in abusing them in order to make an unhappy woman.

CHAPTER 141

WITHOUT speaking at any length, I asked the young grand duke to give me an asylum in his dominions for as long as I might care to stay. I anticipated any questions he might have asked by telling him the reasons which had made me an exile from my native land.

"As to my necessities," I added, "I shall ask for help of no one; I have sufficient funds to ensure my independence. I think of devoting the whole of my time to study."

"So long as your conduct is good," he replied, "the laws guarantee your freedom; but I am glad you have applied to me. Whom do you know in Florence?"

"Ten years ago, my lord, I had some distinguished acquaintances, but now I propose to live in retirement and do not intend renewing any old friendships."

Such was my conversation with the young sovereign and after his assurances I concluded that no one would molest me.

the same measure as himself. However, I had my own way on most occasions, giving in only when it suited me to do so.

We went to see the opera at Lucca and brought two of the dancers home to supper. As the chevalier was drunk, as usual, he treated the woman he had chosen—a superb creature—very indifferently. The other was pretty enough, but I had done nothing serious with her, so I proceeded to avenge the beauty. She took me for the chevalier's father and advised me to give him a better upbringing.

After the chevalier was gone, I betook myself to my studies again, but I supped every night with Madame Denis, who had formerly been a dancer in the King of Prussia's service and had retired to Florence.

She was about my age and therefore not young, but still she had sufficient remains of her beauty to inspire a tender passion; she did not look more than thirty. She was as fresh as a young girl, had excellent manners and was extremely intelligent. Besides all these advantages, she had a comfortable apartment on the first floor of one of the largest cafés in Florence. In front of her room was a balcony, where it was delicious to sit and enjoy the cool of the evening.

The reader may remember how I became her friend in Berlin, in 1764, and, when we met again in Florence, our old flames were re-kindled.

The chief boarder in the house where she lived was Madame Brigonzi, whom I had met at Memel. This lady, who pretended she had been my mistress twenty-five years before, often came into Madame Denis's rooms with an old lover of hers named Marquis Capponi. He was an agreeable and well educated man and, noticing that he seemed to enjoy my conversation, I called on him and he called on me, leaving his card as I was not at home. I returned the visit and he introduced me to his family and invited me to dinner. For the first time since I had come to Florence, I dressed myself with elegance and wore my jewels.

At the Marquis Capponi's I made the acquaintance of Corilla's lover, the Marquis Gennori, who took me to a house where I met my fate. I fell in love with Madame —, a young widow who had spent a few months in Paris. This visit had added to her other attractions the charm of a good manner, which always counts for so much.

This unhappy love made the three months longer which I spent in Florence painful to me.

It was at the beginning of October and about that time, Count Medini arrived in Florence without a penny in his pocket and without being able to pay his *vetturino*, who had him arrested. The wretched man, who seemed to follow me wherever I went, had taken up his abode in the house of a poor Irishman.

I do not know how Medini found out that I was in Florence, but he wrote me a letter, begging me to come and deliver him from the police, who were besieging his room and talking of taking him to prison. He said he only wanted me to go bail for him and protested

that I would not run any risk, as he was sure of being able to pay in a few days.

My readers will be aware that I had good reason for not liking Medini, but, in spite of our quarrel, I could not scorn his entreaty. I even felt inclined to become his surety if he could prove his ability to pay the sum for which he had been arrested. I imagined that the sum must be a small one and could not understand why the landlord did not answer for him. My surprise ceased, however, when I entered his room.

As soon as I appeared, he ran to embrace me, begging me to forget the past and extract him from the painful position in which he found himself.

I cast a rapid glance over the room and saw three trunks, almost empty, their contents scattered about the floor. There was his mistress, whom I knew and who had her reasons for not liking me, her young sister, who was weeping; and her mother, who swore and called Medini a rogue, saying that she would complain of him to the magistrate and that she was not going to allow her dresses and her daughters' dresses to be seized for his debts.

I asked the landlord why he did not go bail, as he had these persons and their effects as security.

"The whole lot," he answered, "won't pay the *vetturino* and the sooner they are out of my house, the better I shall be pleased."

I was astonished and could not understand how the bill could amount to more than the value of all the clothes I saw on the floor, so I asked the *vetturino* to tell me the extent of the debt. He gave me a paper with Medini's signature; the amount was two hundred and forty crowns. "How in the world," I exclaimed, "could he contract this enormous debt?"

I wondered no longer when the *vetturino* told me that he had served them for the last six weeks, having driven the count and the three women from Rome to Leghorn and from Leghorn to Pisa and from Pisa to Florence, paying their board all the way.

"The *vetturino* will never take me as bail for such an amount," I said to Medini, "and, even if he would, I should never be so foolish as to contract such a debt."

"Let me have a word with you in the next room," said he. "I will put the matter clearly before you."

"Certainly."

Two of the police would have prevented his going into the next room, on the plea that he might escape through the window, but I said I would be answerable for him.

Just then the poor *vetturino* came in and kissed my hand, saying that, if I would go bail for the count, he would let me have three months wherein to find the money. As it happened, it was the same man who had taken me to Rome with the Englishwoman who had been seduced by the actor l'Etoile. I told him to wait a moment.

Medini, who was a great talker and a dreadful liar, thought to persuade me by showing me a number of open letters, commending him in

pompous terms to the best houses in Florence. I read the letters but found no mention of money in them and I told him as much.

"I know," said he, "but there is play going on in these houses and I am sure of gaining immense sums."

"You may be aware that I have no confidence in your good luck."

"Then I have another resource."

"What is that?"

He showed me a bundle of manuscript, which I found to be an excellent translation of Voltaire's *Henriade* into Italian verse. Tasso himself could not have done it better. He said he hoped to finish the poem in Florence and present it to the grand duke, who would be sure to make him a magnificent present and constitute him his favourite.

I would not deceive him, but I laughed to myself, knowing that the grand duke only made a pretence of loving literature. A certain Abbé Fontaine, a clever man, amused him with a little natural history, the only science in which he took any interest. He preferred the worst prose to the best verse, not having sufficient intellect to enjoy the subtle charms of poetry. In reality, he had only two passions, women and money.

After spending two wearisome hours with Medini, whose wit was great and his judgment small, after heartily repenting of having yielded to my curiosity and having paid him a visit, I said curtly that I could do nothing for him. Despair drives men crazy; as I was making for the door, he seized me by the collar.

He did not reflect in his dire extremity that he had no arms, that I was stronger than he, that I had twice drawn his blood and that the police, the landlord, the *vetturino* and the servants were in the next room. I was not coward enough to call for help; I caught hold of his neck with both hands and squeezed him till he was nearly choked. He had to let go at last and then I took hold of his collar and asked if he had gone mad. I sent him against the wall and opened the door and the police came in.

I told the *vetturino* I would on no account be Medini's surety or be answerable for him in any way.

Just as I was going out, he leapt forward, crying that I must not abandon him. I had opened the door and the police, fearing he would escape, ran forward to get hold of him. Then began an interesting battle. Medini, who had no arms and was only in his dressing-gown, proceeded to distribute kicks, cuffs and blows amongst the four cowards, who had their swords at their sides, whilst I held the door, to prevent the Irishman going out and calling for assistance.

Medini, whose nose was bleeding and his dress all torn, persisted in fighting till the four policemen let him alone. I liked his courage and pitied him.

There was a moment's silence, and I asked his two liveried servants, who were standing by me, why they had not helped their master. One said he owed him six months' wages and the other said he wanted to arrest him on his own account.

As Medini was endeavouring to staunch the blood in a basin of water, the *vetturino* told him that, as I refused to be his surety, he must go to prison. I was moved by the scene I had witnessed and said to the *vetturino*, "Give him a fortnight's respite and, if he escapes before the expiration of that term, I will pay you." He thought it over for a few moments and then said, "Very good, sir, but I am not going to pay any legal expenses."

I inquired how much the costs amounted to and paid them, laughing at the policemen's claim of damages for blows they had received.

Then the two rascally servants said that, if I would not be surety in the same manner on their account, they would have Medini arrested. However, Medini called out to me to pay no attention to them whatever.

When I had given the *vetturino* his acknowledgment and paid the four or five crowns charged by the police, Medini told me he had more to say to me, but I turned my back on him and went home to dinner.

Two hours later one of his servants came to me and promised, if I would give him six sequins, to warn me if his master made any preparations for flight.

I told him dryly that his zeal was useless to me, as I was quite sure the count would pay all his debts within the term and the next morning I wrote to Medini informing him of the step his servant had taken. He replied with a long letter full of thanks, in which he exerted all his eloquence to persuade me to repair his fortunes. I did not answer.

However, his good genius, still protecting him, brought a person to Florence who got him out of the difficulty. This person was Premislas Zanolitch, who afterwards became as famous as his brother who cheated the Amsterdam merchants and adopted the style of Prince Scanderbeck. I shall speak of him later on. Both of these finished cheats came to a bad end.

Premislas Zanolitch was then at the happy age of twenty-five; he was the son of a gentleman of Budua, a town on the borders of Albania and Dalmatia, formerly subject to the Venetian Republic and now to the Grand Turk. In classic times, it was known as Epirus.

Premislas was a young man of great intelligence and, after having studied in Venice and contracted a Venetian taste for pleasure and enjoyments of all sorts, he could not make up his mind to return to Budua, where his only associates would be dull Slavs—uneducated, unintellectual, coarse and brutish. Consequently, when Premislas and his still more talented brother Stephen were ordered by the Council of Ten to enjoy in their own country the vast sums they had gained at play, they resolved to become adventurers. One took the north and the other the south of Europe and both cheated and duped whenever the opportunity for doing so presented itself.

I had seen Premislas when he was a child, and had already heard reports of a notable achievement of his. At Naples he had cheated the Chevalier de Morosini by persuading him to become his surety to the extent of six thousand ducats and now he arrived in Florence

in a handsome carriage, bringing his mistress with him and with two tall lackeys and a valet in his service.

He took good apartments, hired a carriage, rented a box at the opera, had a skilled cook and gave his mistress a lady-in-waiting. He then showed himself at the best club, richly dressed and covered with jewellery. He introduced himself under the name of Count Premislas Zanovitch.

There is a club in Florence devoted to the use of the nobility. Any stranger can go there without being introduced, but so much the worse for him if his appearance fails to indicate his right to be present. The Florentines are ice towards him, leave him alone and behave in such a manner that the visit is seldom repeated. The club is at once decent and licentious, the gazettes are to be read there, games of all kinds are played, food and drink may be had and even love is available, for ladies frequent the club.

Zanovitch did not wait to be spoken to but made himself agreeable to everyone and congratulated himself on mixing in such distinguished company, talked about Naples, which he had just left, brought in his own name with great adroitness, played high, lost merrily, paid, after pretending to forget all about his debts, and, in short, pleased everyone. I heard all this the next day from the Marquis Capponi, who said that someone had asked him if he knew me, whereat he answered that, when I left Venice, he was at college, but that he had often heard his father speak of me in very high terms. He knew both the Chevalier Morosini and Count Medini and had a good deal to say in praise of the latter. The marquis asked me if I knew him and I replied in the affirmative, without feeling it my duty to disclose certain circumstances which might not have been advantageous to him; and, as Madame Denis seemed curious to make his acquaintance, the Chevalier Puzzi promised to bring him to see her, which he did in the course of a few days.

I happened to be with Madame Denis when Puzzi presented Zanovitch, and I saw before me a fine-looking young man, who seemed by his confident manner to be sure of success in all his undertakings. He was not exactly handsome, but he had a perfect manner and an air of gaiety which seemed infectious, with a thorough knowledge of the laws of good society. He was by no means an egotist and seemed never at a loss for something to talk about. I led the conversation to the subject of his country and he gave me an amusing description of it, talking of his fief—part of which was within the domains of the sultan—as a place where gaiety was unknown and where the most determined misanthrope would die of melancholy.

As soon as he heard my name, he began speaking to me in a tone of the most delicate flattery. I saw the makings of a great adventurer in him, but I thought his luxury would prove the weak point in his cuirass. I thought him something like what I had been fifteen years before but, as it seemed unlikely that he had my resources, I could not help pitying him.

Zanovitch paid me a visit and told me that Medini's position had excited his pity and that he had therefore paid his debts.

I applauded his generosity, but I formed the conclusion that they had laid some plot between them and that I should soon hear of the results of his new alliance.

I returned Zanovitch's call the next day. He was at table with his mistress, whom I should not have recognised if she had not pronounced my name directly she saw me. As she addressed me as Don Giacomo, I called her Donna Ippolita, but in a voice which indicated that I was not certain of her identity. She told me I was quite right. I had supped with her in Naples in company with Lord Baltimore and she was very pretty then.

Zanovitch asked me to dine with him the following day and I should have thanked him and begged to be excused if Donna Ippolita had not pressed me to come. She assured me that I should find good company there and that the cook would excel himself.

I felt rather curious to see the company and, with the idea of showing Zanovitch that I was not likely to become a charge on his purse, I dressed magnificently once more. As I had expected, I found Medini and his mistress there, with two foreign ladies and their attendant cavaliers and a fine-looking and well dressed Venetian, between thirty-five and forty, whom I would not have recognised if Zanovitch had not told me his name, Aloïs Zen. Zen was a patrician name, and I felt obliged to ask what titles I ought to give him.

"Such titles as one old friend gives to another, though it is very possible you do not recollect me, as I was only ten years old when we saw each other last."

Zen then told me he was the son of the captain I had known when I was under arrest at Fort St. Andrew.

"That's twenty-eight years ago; but I remember you, though you had not had the smallpox in those days."

I saw he was annoyed by this remark, but it was his fault, as he had no business to say where he had known me or who his father was. He was the son of a natural son of a noble Venetian—the biggest rogue in the fortress, a first-class rascal and a good-for-nothing in every sense of the word. When I met him in Florence, he had just come from Madrid, where he had made a lot of money by holding a bank at faro in the house of the Venetian ambassador, Marco Zen.

I was glad to meet him, but I found out before the dinner was over that he was completely devoid of education and of the manners of a gentleman; but he was well content with the one talent he possessed, namely, that of correcting the freaks of fortune at games of chance, I did not wait to see the onslaught of the cheats on the dupes, but took leave while the table was being made ready.

Such was my life during the seven months I spent in Florence. After this dinner I never saw Zen or Medini or Zanovitch except by chance in the public places.

Here I must recount some incidents which took place towards the middle of December.

Lord Lincoln, a young man of eighteen, fell in love with a Venetian dancer named Lamberti, who was a universal favourite. On every night when the opera was given, the young Englishman might be seen going to her dressing-room; everyone wondered why he did not visit her at her own house, where he would be certain of a good welcome, for he was English and therefore rich, young and handsome. I believe he was the only son of the Duke of Newcastle.

Zanovitch marked him down and in a short time had become an intimate friend of the fair Lamberti. He then made up to Lord Lincoln and took him to the lady's house, as a polite man takes a friend to see his mistress.

Madame Lamberti, who was in collusion with the rascal, was not niggardly of her favours with the young Englishman. She received him every night to supper with Zanovitch and Zen, who had been presented by the Slav either because of his capital or because Zanovitch was not so accomplished a cheat.

For the first few nights they took care to let the young nobleman win. As they played after supper and Lord Lincoln followed the noble English custom of drinking till he did not know his right hand from his left, he was quite astonished, on waking the next morning, to find that Luck had been as kind to him as Love. The trap was baited, the young lord nibbled and, as may be expected, was finally caught. Zen won twelve thousand pounds of him and Zanovitch lent him the money in instalments of three and four hundred louis at a time, as the Englishman had promised his tutor on his word of honour not to play. Zanovitch won from Zen what Zen won from the lord and so the game was kept up till the young pigeon had lost the enormous sum of twelve thousand guineas. Lord Lincoln promised to pay three thousand guineas the next day and signed three bills of exchange for three thousand guineas each, payable in six months and drawn on his London banker. I heard all about this from Lord Lincoln himself when we met in Bologna three months later.

The next morning the little gaming party was the talk of Florence. Sasso Sassi, the banker, had already paid Zanovitch six thousand sequins by my lord's orders. Medini came to see me, furious at not having been asked to join the party, while I congratulated myself on my absence. My surprise may be imagined when a few days later a person came up to my room and ordered me to leave Florence in three days, and Tuscany in a week. I was petrified and called to my landlord to witness the unrighteous order I had received.

It was December 28th. On the same date three years before I had received orders to leave Barcelona in three days.

I dressed hastily and went to the magistrate, to inquire the reason for my exile and, on entering the room, I found it was the same man who had ordered me to leave Florence eleven years before. I asked

him to give me his reasons and he replied coldly that such was the will of His Highness.

"But as His Highness must have his reasons, it seems to me I am within my rights in inquiring what they are."

"If you think so, you had better betake yourself to the prince; I know nothing about it. He left yesterday for Pisa, where he will stay three days; you can go there."

"Will he pay for my journey?"

"I should doubt it, but you can see for yourself."

"I shall not go to Pisa, but I will write to His Highness, if you will promise to send on the letter."

"I will do so immediately, for it is my duty."

"Very well; you shall have the letter before noon to-morrow and before daybreak I shall be in the States of the Church."

"There's no need for you to hurry."

"There is a very great hurry I cannot breathe the air of a country where liberty is unknown and the sovereign breaks his word. That is what I am going to write to your master."

As I was going out, I met Medini, who had come on the same business as myself.

I laughed and informed him of the results of my interview and how I had been told to go to Pisa.

"What! have you been expelled, too?"

"Yes."

"What have you done?"

"Nothing."

"Nor I. Let us go to Pisa."

"You can go if you like, but I shall leave Florence to-night."

When I got home, I told my landlord to get me a carriage and order four post-horses for nightfall and I then wrote the following letter to the grand duke:

"My Lord,—The thunder which Jove has placed in your hands is only for the guilty; in launching it at me, you have done wrong. Seven months ago, you promised I should remain unmolested so long as I obeyed the laws. I have done so scrupulously and Your Lordship has, therefore, broken your word. I am merely writing to you to let you know that I forgive you and that I shall never give utterance to a word of complaint. Indeed, I would willingly forget the injury you have done me if it were not necessary that I should remember never to set foot in your realms again. The magistrate tells me that I can go and see you in Pisa, but I fear such a step would seem a hardy one to a prince, who should hear what a man has to say before he condemns him, not afterwards.

I am, etc."

When I had finished the letter, I sent it to the magistrate and then began my packing.

I was sitting down to dinner when Medini came in, cursing Zen and

Zanovitch, whom he accused of being the authors of his misfortune, and for refusing to give him a hundred sequins, without which he could not possibly go.

"We are all going to Pisa," said he, "and cannot imagine why you do not come, too."

"Very good," I said, laughingly, "but please leave me now, as I have to do my packing."

As I expected, he wanted me to lend him some money but, on my giving him a direct refusal, he went away.

After dinner I took leave of M. Medici and Madame Denis, the latter of whom had heard the story already. She cursed the grand duke, saying she could not imagine how he could confound the innocent with the guilty. She informed me that Madame Lamberti had received orders to quit, as also a hunchbacked Venetian priest, who used to go to see the dancer but never supped with her. In fact, there was a clean sweep of all the Venetians in Florence.

As I was returning home, I met Lord Lincoln's tutor, whom I had known in Lausanne eleven years before. I told him what had happened to me through his hopeful pupil getting himself fleeced. He laughed and told me the grand duke had advised Lord Lincoln not to pay the money he had lost, to which the young man replied that, if he were not to pay, he should be dishonoured, since the money he had lost had been lent to him.

In leaving Florence, I was cured of an unhappy love which would doubtless have had fatal consequences if I had stayed on. I have spared my readers the painful story, because I cannot recall it to my mind even now without being cut to the heart. The widow whom I loved, and to whom I was so weak as to disclose my feelings, attached me to her triumphal car only to humiliate me, for she disdained my love and myself. I persisted in my courtship and nothing but my enforced departure would have cured me.

As yet, I had not learnt the truth of the maxim that old age, especially when devoid of fortune, is not likely to prove attractive to youth.

I left Florence poorer by a hundred sequins than when I came there. I had lived with the most careful economy throughout the whole of my stay.

I stopped at the first stage within the Pope's dominions and, by the last day but one of the year, I was settled in Bologna, at St. Mark's Hotel. My first visit was paid to Count Marulli, the Florentine *chargé d'affaires*. I begged him to write and tell his master that, out of gratitude for my banishment, I should never cease to sing his praises. As the count had received a letter containing an account of the whole affair, he could not quite believe that I meant what I said.

"You may think what you like," I observed, "but if you knew all, you would see that His Highness has done me a very great service, though quite unintentionally."

He promised to let his master know how I spoke of him.

On January 1st, 1772, I presented myself to Cardinal Brancaforte,

the Pope's legate, whom I had known twenty years before in Paris when he had been sent by Benedict XIV with the holy swaddling clothes for the newly born Duke of Burgundy. We had met at the Lodge of Freemasons, for the members of the sacred college were by no means afraid of their own anathemas. We had also some very pleasant little suppers with pretty sinners in company with Don Francesco Sensale and Count Ranucci. In short, the cardinal was a man of wit and what is called a *bon vivant*.

"Oh, here you are!" cried he, when he saw me. "I was expecting you."

"How could you, my lord? Why should I have come to Bologna, rather than to any other place?"

"For two reasons. In the first place, because Bologna is better than many other places; and secondly, I flatter myself you thought of me. But you needn't say anything here about the life we led together when we were young men."

"It has always been a pleasant recollection to me."

"No doubt. Count Marulli told me yesterday that you spoke very highly of the grand duke, and you are quite right. You can talk to me in confidence; the walls of this room have no ears. How much did you get of the twelve thousand guineas?"

I told him the whole story and showed him a copy of the letter which I had written to the grand duke. He laughed and said he was sorry I had been punished for nothing.

When he heard I thought of staying some months in Bologna, he told me I might reckon on perfect freedom and that, as soon as the matter ceased to become common talk, he would give me open proof of his friendship.

After seeing the cardinal, I resolved to continue in Bologna the kind of life I had been leading in Florence. Bologna is the freest town in all Italy; commodities are cheap and good and all the pleasures of life may be had there at a low price. The town is a fine one and the streets are lined with arcades, a great comfort in so hot a place.

As to society, I did not trouble myself about it. I knew the Bolognese; the nobles are proud, rude and violent, the lowest orders, known as the *birichini*, are worse than the *lazzaroni* of Naples, while the tradesmen and the middle classes are, generally speaking, worthy and respectable people. In Bologna, as in Naples, the two extremes of society are corrupt, while the middle classes are respectable and the depositary of virtue, talents and learning.

However, my intention was to leave society alone, pass my time in study and make the acquaintance of a few men of letters, who are easily accessible everywhere.

In Florence ignorance is the rule and learning the exception, while in Bologna the tincture of letters is almost universal. The university has thrice the usual number of professors; but they are all ill-paid and have to get their living out of the students, who are numerous. Printing is

cheaper in Bologna than anywhere else and, though the Inquisition is established there, the press is almost entirely free.

All the exiles from Florence reached Bologna four or five days after myself. Madame Lamberti only passed through on her way to Venice. Zanolitch and Zen stayed five or six days, but they were no longer in partnership, having quarrelled over the sharing of the booty.

Zanolitch had refused to make one of Lord Lincoln's bills of exchange payable to Zen, because he did not wish to make himself liable in case the Englishman refused to pay. He wanted to go to England and told Zen he was at liberty to do the same.

They went to Milan without having patched up their quarrel, but the Milanese Government ordered them to leave Lombardy and I never heard what arrangements they finally came to. Later on I was informed that the Englishman's bills had all been settled to the uttermost farthing.

Medini, penniless as usual, had taken up his abode in the hotel where I was staying, bringing with him his mistress, her sister and her mother, but with only one servant. He informed me that the grand duke had refused to listen to any of them in Pisa, where he had received a second order to leave Tuscany and so had been obliged to sell everything. Of course, he wanted me to help him, but I turned a deaf ear to his entreaties.

I have never seen this adventurer without his being in a desperate state of impecuniosity, but he would never learn to abate his luxurious habits and always managed to find some way or other out of his difficulties. He was lucky enough to fall in with a Franciscan monk named De Dominis in Bologna, the said monk being on his way to Rome to solicit a brief of laicisation from the Pope. He fell in love with Medini's mistress, who, naturally, made him pay dearly for her charms.

Medini left at the end of three weeks. He went to Germany, where he printed his version of the *Henriade*, having discovered a Mæcenas in the person of the Elector Palatine. After that he wandered about Europe for twelve years and died in a London prison, in 1788.

I had always warned him to give England a wide berth, as I felt certain that, if he once went there, he would not escape English bolts and bars and, if he got on the wrong side of the prison doors, he would never come out alive. He despised my advice and, if he did so with the idea of proving me a liar, he made a mistake for he proved me to be a prophet.

Medini had the advantage of high birth, a good education and intelligence; but, as he was a poor man with luxurious tastes, he either corrected fortune at play or went into debt and was consequently obliged to be always on the wing, to avoid imprisonment. He lived in this way for seventy years, and he might possibly be alive now if he had followed my advice. Eight years ago Count Tosio told me that he had seen Medini in a London prison, and that the silly fellow confessed he had come to London only with the hope of proving me to be a liar.

Medini's fate will never prevent me from giving good advice to a poor wretch on the brink of the precipice. Twenty years ago I told Cagliostro (who called himself Count Pellegrini in those days) not to set foot in Rome and, if he had followed this counsel, he would not have died miserably in a Roman prison.

Thirty years ago a wise man advised me to beware of visiting Spain. I went but, as the reader knows, I had no reason to congratulate myself on my visit.

A week after my arrival in Bologna, happening to be in the shop of Taruffi, the bookseller, I made the acquaintance of a cross-eyed priest, who struck me after a quarter of an hour's talk as a man of learning and talent. He presented me with two works which had recently been issued by two of the young professors at the university. He told me I should find them amusing reading and he was right.

The first treatise contended that women's faults should be forgiven them, since they were really the work of the matrix, which influenced them in spite of themselves. The second treatise was a criticism of the first. The author granted that the uterus was an animal, but denied the alleged influence, as no anatomist had succeeded in discovering any communication between it and the brain.

I determined to write a reply to the two pamphlets and did so in the course of three days. When my reply was finished, I sent it to M. Dandolo, instructing him to have five hundred copies printed. When they arrived, I gave a bookseller the agency and in a fortnight I had made a hundred sequins.

The first pamphlet was called *L'Utero Pensante*, the second was in French and bore the title *La Force Vitale*, while I called my reply *Lana Caprina*. I treated the matter in an easy vein, not without some hints of deep learning, and made fun of the lucubrations of the two physicians. My preface was in French, but full of Parisian idioms, which rendered it unintelligible to all who had not visited the gay capital and this circumstance gained me a good many friends amongst the younger generation.

The squinting priest, whose name was Zacchierdi, introduced me to the Abbé Severini, who became my intimate friend in the course of ten or twelve days. This abbé made me leave the inn and got me two pleasant rooms in the house of a retired artiste, the widow of the tenor Carlanì. He also made arrangements with a pastry-cook to send me my dinner and supper. All this, plus a servant, cost me only ten sequins a month.

Severini was the agreeable cause of my losing temporarily my taste for study. I put by my *Iliad*, feeling sure that I should be able to finish it again. Severini introduced me to his family and before long I became very intimate with him. I also became the favourite of his sister, a lady rather plain than pretty, thirty years old, but full of intelligence.

In the course of Lent, the abbé introduced me to all the best dancers and operatic singers in Bologna, which is the nursery of the heroines

of the stage. They may be had cheaply enough on their native soil. Every week the good abbé introduced me to a fresh one and like a true friend watched carefully over my finances. He was a poor man himself and could not afford to contribute anything towards the expenses of our little parties but, as they would have cost me double without his help, the arrangement was a convenient one for both of us.

About this time, there was a good deal of talk about a Bolognese nobleman, Marquis Albergati Capacelli. He had made a present of his private theatre to the public and was himself an excellent actor. He had made himself notorious by obtaining a divorce from his wife, whom he did not like, so as to enable him to marry a dancer, by whom he had two children. The amusing point in this divorce was that he obtained it on the plea that he was impotent and sustained his plea by submitting to an examination by four skilled and impartial judges. The marriage was pronounced null and void on the ground of "relative impotence," for it was well known that he had had children by another woman.

If reason and not prejudice had been consulted, the procedure would have been very different for, if relative impotence was considered a sufficient ground for divorce, of what use was the examination? But the destruction of old customs and old prejudices is often the work of long ages.

I felt curious to know this character and wrote to M. Dandolo to get me a letter of introduction to the marquis. In a week my good old friend sent me the desired letter. It was written by another Venetian, M. de Zaguri, an intimate friend of the marquis. The letter was not sealed, so I read it. I was delighted; no one could have commended in a more delicate manner a person unknown to himself, but the friend of a friend.

I thought myself bound to write a letter of thanks to M. Zaguri. I said that I desired to obtain my pardon more than ever after reading his letter, which made me long to go to Venice and make the acquaintance of such a worthy nobleman. I did not expect an answer, but I got one. M. de Zaguri said that my desire was such a flattering one to himself that he meant to do his best to obtain my recall. The reader will see that he was successful, but not till after two years of continuous effort.

Albergati was away from Bologna at the time but, when he returned, Severini let me know and I called at the place. The porter told me that His Excellence (all the nobles are "Excellencies" in Bologna) had gone to his country house, where he meant to pass the whole of the spring.

In two or three days I drove out to his villa. I arrived at a charming mansion and, finding no one at the door, I went upstairs and entered a large room where a gentleman and an exceedingly pretty woman were just sitting down to dinner. The dishes had been brought in and there were only two places laid.

I made a polite bow and asked the gentleman if I had the honour of addressing the Marquis Albergati. He replied in the affirmative, whereupon I gave him my letter of introduction. He took it, read the

superscription and put it in his pocket, telling me I was very kind to have taken so much trouble and that he would be sure to read it.

"It has been no trouble at all," I replied, "but I hope you will read the letter. It is written by M. de Zaguri, whom I asked to do me this service, as I have long desired to make Your Lordship's acquaintance."

His Lordship smiled and said very pleasantly that he would read it after dinner and would see what he could do for his friend Zaguri.

Our dialogue was over in a few seconds. Thinking him extremely rude, I turned my back and went downstairs, arriving just in time to prevent the postillion taking out the horses. I promised him a double gratuity if he would take me to some village at hand, where he could bait his horses while I breakfasted.

Just as the postillion had gone on horseback, a servant came running up. He told me very politely that His Excellence begged me to step upstairs.

I put my hand in my pocket and gave the man my card with my name and address and, telling him that that was what his master wanted, I ordered the postillion to drive off at a full gallop. When we had gone half a league, we stopped at a good inn and then proceeded on our way back to Bologna.

The same day I wrote to M. de Zaguri and described the welcome I had received at the hand of the marquis. I enclosed the letter in another to M. Dandolo, begging him to read it and send it on. I begged the noble Venetian to write to the marquis that, having offended me grievously, he must prepare to give me due satisfaction.

I laughed with all my heart the next day when my landlady gave me a visiting card with the inscription, General Marquis Albergati. She told me the marquis had called on me himself and, on hearing I was out, had left his card.

I was by no means satisfied, for it was a *gasconnade*, only lacking the wit of the true Gascon. I determined to await M. Zaguri's reply before making up my mind as to the kind of satisfaction I should demand.

While I was inspecting the card and wondering what right the marquis had to the title of "general," Severini came in and informed me that the marquis had been made a Knight of the Order of St. Stanislas by the King of Poland, who had also given him the style of "royal chamberlain."

"Is he a general in the Polish service as well?" I asked.

"I really don't know."

"I understand it all," I said to myself. "In Poland, a chamberlain has the rank of adjutant-general, and the marquis calls himself 'general.' But 'general' what? The adjective without a substantive is a mere cheat."

I saw my opportunity and wrote a comic dialogue, which I had printed the next day. I made a present of the work to a bookseller and in three or four days he sold out the whole edition at a *bajocco* apiece.

ANYONE who attacks a proud person in a comic vein is almost sure of success; the laugh is generally on his side.

I asked in my dialogue whether it was lawful for a provost marshal to call himself simply "marshal," and whether a lieutenant-colonel had a right to the title of "colonel." I also asked whether the man who preferred titles of honour for which he had paid in hard cash, to his ancient and legitimate rank could pass for a sage.

Of course, the marquis had to laugh at my dialogue, but he was called nothing but "M. le général" ever after. He had placed the royal arms of Poland over the gate of his palace, much to the amusement of Count Mischinski, the Polish ambassador to Berlin, who happened to be passing through Bologna at that time.

I told the Pole of my dispute with the mad marquis and persuaded him to pay Albercati a visit, leaving his card. The ambassador did so and the call was returned, but Albercati's cards no longer bore the title of "General."

The Dowager Electress of Saxony having come to Bologna, I hastened to pay my respects to her. She had only come to see the famous *castrato*, Farinelli, who had left Madrid and now lived in Bologna in great comfort. He placed a magnificent collation before the Electress and sang a song of his own composition, accompanying himself on the piano. The Electress, who was an enthusiastic musician, embraced the *castrato*, exclaiming, "Now I can die happy!"

Farinelli, who was also known as the Chevalier Broschi, had reigned, as it were, in Spain, till the Parmese wife of Philip V had laid plots which obliged him to leave the Court after the disgrace of Encenada. The Electress noticed a portrait of the Queen and spoke very highly of her, mentioning some circumstances which must have taken place in the reign of Ferdinand VI. The famous musician burst into tears and said that Queen Barbara was as good as Elizabeth of Parma was wicked.

Broschi might have been seventy when I saw him in Bologna. He was very rich and in the enjoyment of good health and yet he was unhappy, continually shedding tears at the thought of Spain. Ambition is a more powerful passion than avarice. Besides, Farinelli had another reason for unhappiness. He had a nephew, heir to all his wealth, whom he married to a noble Tuscan lady, hoping to found a titled family, though in an indirect kind of way. But this marriage was a torment to him, for, in his impotent old age, he was so unfortunate as to fall in love with his niece and become jealous of his nephew. Worse than all, the lady grew to hate him and Farinelli had sent his nephew abroad, while he never allowed the wife to go out of his sight.

Lord Lincoln arrived in Bologna with an introduction to the cardinal legate, who asked him to dinner and did me the honour of giving me an invitation to meet him. The cardinal was thus convinced that

Lord Lincoln and I had never met and that the grand duke of Tuscany had committed a great injustice in banishing me. It was on that occasion that the young nobleman told me how they had spread the snare, though he denied that he had been cheated; he was far too proud to acknowledge such a thing. He died of debauchery in London three or four years after.

I also saw in Bologna the Englishman Aston with Madame Slopitz, sister of the charming Callimena. Madame Slopitz was much handsomer than her sister. She had presented Aston with two babes, as beautiful as Raphael's cherubs. I spoke to her of her sister and, from the way in which I sang her praises, she guessed that I had loved her. She told me she would be in Florence during the Carnival of 1773, but I did not see her again till the year 1776, when I was in Venice.

The dreadful Nina Bergonzi, who had made a madman of Count Ricla and was the source of all my woes in Barcelona, had come to Bologna at the beginning of Lent, occupying a pleasant house which she had taken. She had *carte blanche* with a banker and kept up a great state, affirming herself to be with child by the Viceroy of Catalonia and demanding the honours which would be given to a queen who had graciously chosen Bologna as the place of her confinement. She had a special recommendation to the legate, who often visited her, but in the greatest secrecy.

The time of her confinement approached and the insane Ricla sent over a confidential man, Don Martino, who was empowered to have the child baptised and to recognise it as Ricla's natural offspring.

Nina made a show of her condition, appearing at the theatre and in the public places without shame. The greatest nobles of Bologna paid court to her and Nina told them they might do so, but that she could not guarantee their safety from the jealous dagger of Ricla. She was impudent enough to tell them what had happened to me in Barcelona, not knowing that I was in Bologna.

She was extremely surprised to hear from Count Zini, who knew me, that I was living in the same town as herself.

When the count met me, he asked if the Barcelona story was true. I did not care to take him into my confidence, so I replied that I did not know Nina and that the story had doubtless been made up by her to see whether he would encounter danger for her sake.

I followed a different course with the cardinal and owned up to all that had happened in Barcelona when he reported the story to me as the perfidious Nina had related it to him. His Eminence was astonished when I gave him some insight into Nina's shameless character and informed him that she was the daughter of her sister and her grandfather.

"I could take my life," said I, "that Nina is no more with child than you are."

"Oh, come!" said he, laughing, "that is really too strong! Why shouldn't she have a child? It is a very simple matter, it seems to me. Possibly it may not be Ricla's child, but there can be no doubt that

Adelaide became the wonder of Bologna.

A year after I left, the Comte du Barry, brother-in-law of the famous mistress of Louis XV, visited Bologna and became so amorous of Adelaide that her mother sent her away, fearing he would carry her off. Du Barry offered her a hundred thousand francs for the girl, but she refused the offer.

I saw Adelaide five years later on the boards of a Venetian theatre. When I went to congratulate her, she said, "My mother brought me into the world and I think she will send me out of it; this dancing is killing me."

In point of fact, this delicate flower faded and died after seven years of the severe life to which her mother had exposed her. Madame Soavi, who had not taken the precaution to settle the six thousand francs on herself, lost all in losing Adelaide and died miserably, after having rolled in riches. But, alas, I am not the man to reproach anyone on the score of improvidence.

In Bologna I met the famous Afflisio, who had been discharged from the imperial service and had turned theatre manager. He went from bad to worse and five or six years later committed forgery, was sent to the galleys and there died.

I was also impressed by the example of a man of a good family, who had once been rich. This was Count Filomarino. He was living in great misery, deprived of the use of all his limbs by a succession of venereal complaints. I often went to see him, to give him a few pieces of money and listen to his malevolent talk, for his tongue was the only member that continued active. He was a scoundrel and a slanderer and writhed under the thought that he could not go to Naples and torment his relatives, who were in reality respectable people, although monsters according to his showing.

Madame Sabatini, the dancer, had returned to Bologna, having made enough money to rest upon her laurels. She married a professor of anatomy and brought all her wealth to him as a dower. She had with her her sister, who was not rich and had no talents but was very agreeable. At her house, I met an abbé, a fine young man of modest appearance. The sister seemed to be deeply in love with him, while he appeared to be grateful and nothing more.

I made some remark to the modest Adonis, and he gave me a very sensible answer. We walked away together, and, after telling each other what brought us to Bologna, we parted, agreeing to meet again. The abbé, who was twenty-four or twenty-five years old, was not in orders and was the only son of a noble family of Novara, which was unfortunately poor as well as noble. He had a very scanty revenue and was able to live more cheaply in Bologna than Novara, where everything is dear. Besides, he did not care for his relatives; he had no friends and everybody there was more or less ignorant.

The Abbé de Bolini, as he was called, was a man of tranquil mind, living a peaceful and quiet life above all things. He liked lettered men more than letters and did not trouble to gain the reputation of a wit.

He knew he was not a fool and, when he mixed with learned men, he was clever enough to be a good listener.

Both his temperament and his purse made him moderate in all things and he had received a sound Christian education. He never talked about religion, but nothing scandalised him. He seldom praised and never blamed. He was almost entirely indifferent to women, fleeing ugly women and blue stockings and gratifying the passion of pretty ones more out of kindness than love, for in his heart he considered women as more likely to make a man miserable than happy. I was especially interested in the last characteristic.

We had been friends for three weeks when I took the liberty of asking him how he reconciled his theories with his attachment to Brigida Sabatini. He supped with her every evening and she breakfasted with him every morning. When I went to see him, either she was there already or she came in before my call was over. She breathed forth love in every glance, while the abbé was kind but, in spite of his politeness, evidently bored.

Brigida looked well enough, but she was at least ten years older than the abbé. She was very polite to me and did her best to convince me that the abbé was happy in the possession of her heart and that they much enjoyed the delights of mutual love. But, when I asked him over a bottle of good wine about his affection for Brigida, he sighed, smiled, blushed, looked down and finally confessed that his connection with her was the misfortune of his life.

"Misfortune? Does she make you sigh in vain? If so, you should leave her and thus regain your happiness."

"How can I sigh? I am not in love with her. She is in love with me and tries to make me her slave."

"How do you mean?"

"She wants me to marry her and I promised to do so, partly from weakness and partly from pity, and now she is in a hurry."

"I daresay; all these elderly girls are in a hurry."

"Every evening she treats me to tears, supplications and despair. She summons me to keep my promise and accuses me of deceiving her, so you may imagine that my situation is an unhappy one."

"Have you any obligations towards her?"

"None whatever. She violated me, so to speak, for all the advances came from her. She has only what her sister gives her from day to day and, if she got married, she would not get that."

"Have you got her with child?"

"I have taken good care not to do so and that's what has irritated her; she calls all my little stratagems detestable treason."

"Nevertheless, you have made up your mind to marry her sooner or later?"

"I'd as soon hang myself. If I got married to her, I should be four times as poor as I am now and all my relatives in Novara would laugh at me for bringing home a wife of her age. Besides, she is neither rich nor well born and in Novara they demand the one or the other."

"Then, as a man of honour and as a man of sense, you ought to break with her and the sooner, the better."

"I know but, lacking moral strength, what am I to do? If I did not go and sup with her to-night, she would infallibly come after me to see what had happened. I can't lock my door in her face and I can't tell her to go away."

"No, but neither can you go on in this miserable way. You must make up your mind and cut the Gordian knot, like Alexander."

"I haven't his sword."

"I will lend it you."

"What do you mean?"

"Listen to me. You must go and live in another town. She will hardly go after you there, I suppose."

"That is a very good plan, but flight is a difficult matter."

"Difficult? Not at all. Do you promise to do what I tell you and I will arrange everything quite comfortably. Your mistress will not know anything about it till she misses you at supper."

"I will do whatever you tell me and I shall never forget your kindness, but Brigida will go mad with grief."

"Well, my first order to you is not to give her grief a single thought. You have only to leave everything to me. Would you like to start to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?"

"Yes. Have you any debts?"

"No."

"Do you need money?"

"I have sufficient. But the idea of leaving to-morrow has taken my breath away. I must have three days' delay."

"Why so?"

"I expect some letters the day after to-morrow and I must write to my relatives to tell them where I am going."

"I will take charge of your letters and send them on to you."

"Where shall I be?"

"I will tell you at the moment of your departure; trust in me. I will send you at once where you will be comfortable. All you have to do is to leave your trunk in the hands of your landlord, with orders not to give it up to anyone but myself."

"Very well. I am to go without my trunk, then."

"Yes. You must dine with me every day till you go and mind not to tell anyone whatsoever that you intend leaving Bologna."

"I will take care not to do so."

The worthy young fellow looked quite radiant. I embraced him and thanked him for putting so much trust in me.

I felt proud at the good work I was about to perform and smiled at the thought of Brigida's anger when she found that her lover had escaped. I wrote to my good friend Dandolo that in five or six days a young abbé would present himself before him, bearing a letter from me. I begged Dandolo to get him a comfortable and cheap lodging,

as my friend was so unfortunate as to be indifferently provided with money, though an excellent man. I then wrote the letter of which the abbé was to be the bearer.

The next day Bolini told me that Brigida was far from suspecting his flight as, owing to his gaiety at the thought of freedom, he had contented her so well during the night she had passed with him that she thought him as much in love as she was.

"She has all my linen," he added, "but I hope to get a good part of it back under one pretext or another and she is welcome to the rest."

On the day appointed he called on me, as we had arranged the night before, carrying a huge portmanteau containing necessities. I took him to Modena in a post-chaise and there we dined; afterward, I gave him a letter for M. Dandolo, promising to send on his trunk the next day.

He was delighted to hear that Venice was his destination, as he had long wished to go there, and I promised him that M. Dandolo should see that he lived as comfortably and cheaply as he had done in Bologna. I saw him off and returned to Bologna. The trunk I dispatched after him the following day.

As I had expected, the poor victim appeared before me all in tears the next day. I felt it my duty to pity her; it would have been cruel to pretend I did not know the reason of her despair. I gave her a long but kindly sermon, endeavouring to persuade her that I had acted for the best in preventing the abbé marrying her, as such a step would have plunged them both into misery.

The poor woman threw herself weeping at my feet, begging me to bring her abbé back and swearing by all the saints that she would never mention the word "marriage" again. By way of calming her, I said I would do my best to win him over.

She asked where he was and I said in Venice, but of course she did not believe me. There are circumstances when a clever man deceives by telling the truth and such a lie as this must be approved by the most rigorous moralists.

Twenty-seven months later I met Bolini in Venice. I shall describe the meeting in its proper place.

A few days after he had gone, I made the acquaintance of the fair Viscioletta and fell so ardently in love with her that I had to make up my mind to buy her with hard cash. The time when I could make women fall in love with me was no more and I had to resign myself either to do without them or to buy them.

I cannot help laughing when people ask me for advice, as I feel so certain that my advice will not be taken. Man is an animal that has to learn his lesson by hard experience in battling with the storms of life. Thus the world is always in disorder and always ignorant, for those who know are always in an infinitesimal proportion to the whole.

Madame Viscioletta, whom I went to see every day and who had made me acquainted with the Quaranta Doria (who was considered a

bit out of his mind), treated me as the Florentine widow had done, though the widow required forms and ceremonies which I could dispense with in the presence of the fair Viscioletta, who was nothing else than a professional courtesan, though she called herself a *virtuosa*.

I had besieged her for three weeks without any success and, when I made attempts, she repulsed me laughingly.

Monsignor Buoncompagni, the vice-legate, was her lover in secret, though all the town knew it, but this sort of conventional secrecy is common enough in Italy. As an ecclesiastic, he could not court her openly, but the hussy made no mystery of it to me.

Being in need of money and preferring to get rid of my carriage rather than anything else, I announced it for sale at the price of three hundred and fifty Roman crowns. It was a comfortable and handsome carriage and was well worth the price. The owner of the coach-house came to tell me that the vice-legate offered three hundred crowns and I felt a real pleasure in thwarting my favoured rival's desires. I told the man that I had stated my price and meant to adhere to it, as I was not accustomed to bargaining.

I went to see my carriage at noon one day to make sure it was in good condition and I met the vice-legate, who knew me from meeting me at the legate's and must have been aware that I was poaching on his preserves. He told me rudely that the carriage was not worth more than three hundred crowns and I ought to be glad of the opportunity of getting rid of it, as it was much too good for me.

I had the strength of mind to ignore his violence and, telling him dryly that I did not chaffer, I turned my back on him and went my way.

The next day the fair Viscioletta wrote me a note to the effect that she would be very much obliged if I would let the vice-legate have the carriage at his own price, as she felt sure he would give it to her. I replied that I would call on her in the afternoon and that my answer would depend on my welcome. I went in due course and after a lively discussion she gave way and I then signified my willingness to sell the carriage for the sum offered by the vice-legate.

The next day she had her carriage and I had my three hundred crowns and I let the proud prelate understand that I had avenged myself for his rudeness.

About this time Severini succeeded in obtaining a position as tutor in an illustrious Neapolitan family and, as soon as he received his journey-money, he left Bologna. I also had thoughts of leaving the town.

I had kept up an interesting correspondence with M. Zaguri, who had made up his mind to obtain my recall in concert with Dandolo, who desired nothing better. Zaguri told me that, if I wanted to obtain my pardon, I must come and live as near as possible to the Venetian borders, so that the State Inquisitors might satisfy themselves of my good conduct. M. Zuliani, brother to the Duchess of Fiano, gave me the same advice and promised to use all his influence in my behalf.

With the idea of following this counsel, I decided to set up my abode in Trieste, where M. Zaguri told me he had an intimate friend, to whom he would give me a letter of introduction. As I could not go by land without passing through the States of Venice, I resolved to go to Ancona, whence boats sail to Trieste every day. As I should pass through Pesaro, I asked my patron to give me a letter for the Marquis Mosca, a distinguished man of letters whom I had long wished to know. Just then he was a good deal talked about on account of a treatise on alms which he had recently published and which the Roman curia had placed on the *Index*.

The marquis was a devotee as well as a man of learning and was imbued with the doctrine of Saint Augustine, which becomes Jansenism if pushed to an extreme point.

I was sorry to leave Bologna, for I had spent eight pleasant months there. In two days I arrived at Pesaro in perfect health and well provided for in every way.

I left my letter at the marquis's and he came to see me the same day. He said his house would always be open to me and that he would leave me in his wife's hands, to be introduced to everybody and everything in the place. He ended by asking me to dine with him the following day, adding that, if I cared to examine his library, he could give me an excellent cup of chocolate.

I went and saw an enormous collection of comments on the Latin poets from Ennius to the poets of the twelfth century of our era. He had had them all printed at his own expense and at his private press, in four tall folios, very accurately printed but without elegance. I told him my opinion and he agreed that I was right. The want of elegance, which had spared him an outlay of a hundred thousand francs, had deprived him of a profit of three hundred thousand.

He presented me with a volume, which he sent to my inn, an immense folio volume entitled *Marmora Pisaurentia*, which I had no time to examine.

I was much pleased with the marchioness, who had three daughters and two sons, all good-looking and well bred. The marchioness was a woman of the world, while her husband's interests were confined to his books. This difference in disposition sometimes gave rise to a slight element of discord, but a stranger would never have noticed it if he had not been told.

Fifty years ago, a wise man said to me, "Every family is troubled by some small tragedy, which should be kept private with the greatest care; in fine, people should learn to wash their dirty linen in private."

The marchioness paid me great attention during the five days I spent at Pesaro. In the day she drove me from one country house to another and at night she introduced me to all the nobility of the town.

The marquis might have been fifty then. He was cold by temperament, had no other passion but that of study and his morals were pure. He had founded an academy, of which he was the president. Its design was a fly, in allusion to his name Mosca, with the words

"*de me ce*," that is to say, "Take away *c* from *musca*, you have *musa*."

His only failing was that which the monks regard as his finest quality—he was religious to excess and this excess of religion went beyond the bounds where *nequit consistere rectum*.

But which is the better, to go beyond these bounds or not to come up to them? I cannot venture to decide the question. Horace says, *Nulla est mihi religio*, and it is the beginning of an ode in which he condemns philosophy for estranging him from religion. Excess of every kind is bad.

I left Pesaro, delighted with the good company I had met and only sorry I had not seen the marquis's brother, who was praised by everyone.

CHAPTER 143

SOME time elapsed before I had time to examine the Marquis of Mosca's collection of Latin poets, amongst which the *Priapeia* found no place.

No doubt this work bore witness to his love for literature, but not to his learning, for there was nothing of his own in it. All he had done was to classify each fragment in chronological order. I should have liked to see notes, comments, explanations and such like, but there was nothing of the kind. Besides, the type was not elegant, the margins were poor, the paper common and misprints not infrequent. All these are bad faults, especially in a work which should have become a classic. Consequently, the book was not a profitable one and, as the marquis was not a rich man, he was occasionally reproached by his wife for the money he had expended.

I read his treatise on almsgiving and his apology for it and understood a good deal of the marquis's way of thinking. I could easily imagine that his writings must have given great offence at Rome and that with sounder judgment he would have avoided this danger. Of course, the marquis was really in the right, but in theology one is in the right only when Rome says "yes."

The marquis was a rigorist and, though he had a tincture of Jansenism, he often differed from Saint Augustine. He denied, for instance, that almsgiving could annul the penalty attached to sin and, according to him, the only sort of almsgiving which had any merit was that prescribed in the Gospel: "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." He even maintained that he who gave alms sinned unless it were done with the greatest secrecy, for alms given in public are sure to be accompanied by vanity.

It might have been objected that the merit of alms lies in the intention with which they are given. It is quite possible for a good man to slip a piece of money into the palm of some miserable being standing in a public place and this may be done solely with the idea of relieving distress, without a thought of the onlookers.

As I wanted to go to Trieste, I might have crossed the gulf by a small boat from Pesaro; a good wind was blowing and I should have got to Trieste in twelve hours. This was my proper way, for I had nothing to do in Ancona and it was a hundred miles longer, but I had said I would go by Ancona and I felt obliged to do so.

I had always a strong tincture of superstition, which has exercised considerable influence on my strange career. Like Socrates, I, too, had a demon, to whom I referred my doubtful counsels, doing his will and obeying blindly when I felt a voice within telling me to forbear. A hundred times have I thus followed my genius and occasionally I have felt inclined to complain that it did not impel me to act against my reason more frequently. Whenever I did so, I found that impulse was right and reason wrong and, for all that, I have still continued reasoning.

When I arrived at Senigallia, at three stages from Ancona, my *vetturino* asked me, just as I was going to bed, whether I would allow him to accommodate a Jew, who was also going to Ancona. My first impulse made me answer sharply that I wanted no one in my chaise, much less a Jew.

The *vetturino* went out, but a voice said within me: "You must take this poor Israelite," and, in spite of my repugnance, I called back the man and signified my assent.

"Then you must make up your mind to start at an earlier hour, for it is Friday to-morrow and you know the Jews are not allowed to travel after sunset."

"I shall not start a moment earlier than I intended, but you can make your horses travel as quickly as you like."

He gave me no answer and went out. The next morning I found my Jew, an honest-looking fellow, in the carriage. The first thing he asked me was why I did not like Jews.

"Because your religion teaches you to hate men of all other religions, especially Christians, and you think you have done a meritorious action when you have deceived us. You do not look upon us as brothers. You are usurious, unmerciful, our enemies, and so I do not like you."

"You are mistaken, sir. Come with me to our synagogue this evening and you will hear us pray for all Christians, beginning with Our Lord, the Pope."

I could not help bursting into a roar of laughter.

"True," I replied, "but the prayer comes from the mouth only and not from the heart. If you do not immediately confess that the Jews would not pray for the Christians if they were the masters, I will fling you out of the chaise."

Of course I did not carry out this threat, but I completed his confusion by quoting in Hebrew the passages in the Old Testament where the Jews are bidden to do all possible harm to the Gentiles, whom they were to curse every day.

After this, the poor man said no more. When we were going to take our dinner, I asked him to sit beside me, but he said his religion would not allow him to do so and that he would eat only eggs, fruit and some

foie gras sausage he had in his pocket. He drank only water because he was not sure that the wine was unadulterated.

"You stupid fellow," I exclaimed, "how can you ever be certain of the purity of wine unless you have made it yourself?"

When we were on our way again, he said that, if I were willing to come and stay with him and content myself with such dishes as God had not forbidden, he would make me more comfortable than if I went to the inn and at a cheaper rate.

"Then you let lodgings to Christians?"

"I don't let lodgings to anybody, but I will make an exception in your case, to disabuse you of some of your mistaken notions. I will ask you only six pauls a day and give you two good meals, without wine."

"Then you must get me fish and wine, I paying for them as extras."

"Certainly. I have a Christian cook and my wife pays a good deal of attention to the cooking."

"You can give me *foie gras* every day if you will eat it with me."

"I know what you think, but you shall be satisfied."

I got down at the Jew's house, wondering at myself as I did so. However, I knew that, if I did not like my accommodation, I could leave the next day.

His wife and children were waiting for him and gave him a joyful welcome in honour of the Sabbath. All servile work was forbidden on this day holy to the Lord; all over the house and on the faces of all the family, I observed a kind of festal air.

I was welcomed like a brother and responded as best I could; but a word from Mardocheus (so he was called) changed their politeness of feeling into a politeness of interest.

Mardocheus showed me two rooms, for me to choose the one which suited me, but, liking them both, I said I would take the two for another paul a day, with which arrangement he was well enough pleased. Mardocheus told his wife what we had settled and she instructed the Christian servant to cook my supper for me. I had my effects taken upstairs and then went with Mardocheus to the synagogue.

During the short service, the Jews paid no attention to me or to several other Christians who were present. The Jews go to the synagogue to pray and in this respect I think their conduct worthy of imitation by the Christians.

On leaving the synagogue, I went by myself to the Exchange, thinking over the happy time which would never return. It was in Ancona that I had begun to enjoy life on a large scale and, when I thought it over, it was quite a shock to find that this was thirty years ago, for thirty years is a long period in a man's life. And yet I felt quite young, in spite of the tenth lustrum, so near at hand for me.

What a difference I found between my youth and my middle age! I could scarcely recognise myself. I was then happy, but now unhappy; then all the world was before me and the future seemed a gorgeous dream, but now I was obliged to confess that my life had been all in

vain. I might live twenty years more, but I felt that the happy time had passed and the future seemed all dreary.

I reckoned up my forty-seven years and saw Fortune flying away. This in itself was enough to sadden me, for, without the favours of the fickle goddess, life was not worth living—for me, at all events.

My object then was to return to my country; it was as if I struggled to undo all that I had done. All I could hope for was to soften the hardships of the slow but certain passage to the grave.

These are the thoughts of declining years and not of youth. The young man looks only to the present, believes that the sky will always smile upon him and laughs at philosophy, as it vainly preaches of old age, misery, repentance and, worst of all, abhorred death.

If such were my thoughts twenty-six years ago, what must they be now, when I am all alone, poor, despised and impotent! They would kill me if I did not resolutely subdue them for, whether for good or ill, my heart is still young. Of what use are desires, when one can no longer satisfy them? I write to kill *ennui* and I take pleasure in writing. Whether I write sense or nonsense, what matters? I am amused and that is enough.

*Malo scriptor delirus, inersque videri,
Dum mea delectent mala me vel denique fallunt,
Quam sapere . . .*

When I got home, I found Mardocheus at supper with his numerous family, composed of eleven or twelve individuals and including his mother, an old woman of ninety, in excellent health. I noticed another Jew of middle age; he was the husband of his eldest daughter, who did not strike me as pretty; but the younger daughter, who was destined for a Jew of Pesaro whom she had never seen, engaged all my attention. I remarked to her that, if she had not seen her future husband, she could not be in love with him, whereupon she replied in a serious voice that it was not necessary to be in love before one married. The old woman praised the girl for this sentiment and said she had not been in love with her husband till the first child was born.

I shall call the pretty Jewess Leah, as I have good reasons for not using her real name. While they were enjoying their meal, I sat down beside her and tried to make myself as agreeable as possible, but she would not even look at me.

My supper was excellent and my bed was very comfortable.

The next day my landlord told me that I could give my linen to the maid and that Leah would take charge of making it ready for me.

I told him I had relished my supper but that I should like some *foie gras* every day, as I had a dispensation.

"You shall have some to-morrow, but Leah is the only one of us who eats it."

"Then Leah must take it with me and you can tell her that I shall give her some Cyprus wine which is perfectly pure."

I had no wine but I went for it the same morning to the Venetian consul, giving him M. Dandolo's letter. The consul was a Venetian of the old leaven. He had heard my name and seemed delighted to make my acquaintance. He was a kind of clown without the paint, fond of a joke, a regular gourmand and a man of great experience. He sold me some Scopolò and old Cyprus muscat, but he began to exclaim when he heard where I was lodging and how I had come there.

"He is rich," he said, "but he is also a great usurer and, if you borrow money of him, he will make you repent it."

After informing the consul that I should not leave till the end of the month, I went home to dinner, which proved excellent.

The next day, I gave out my linen to the maid and Leah came to ask me how I wished her to wash my laces. If she had examined me more closely, she would have seen that the sight of her magnificent bosom, unprotected by any kerchief, had had a remarkable effect on me. I told her that I left it all to her, and that she could do what she liked with the linen.

"Then it will all come under my hands, if you are in no hurry to go."

"You can make me stay as long as you like," said I. But she seemed not to hear this declaration.

"Everything is quite right," I continued, "except the chocolate; I liked it well frothed"

"Then I will make it for you myself."

"Then I will give out a double quantity and we will take it together."

"I don't like chocolate."

"I am sorry to hear that; but you like *foi gras*?"

"Yes, I do and, from what my father tells me, I am going to take some with you to-day."

"I shall be delighted."

"I suppose you are afraid of being poisoned?"

"Not at all; I only wish we could die together."

The rogue pretended not to understand and left me burning with desire. I felt that I must either obtain possession of her or tell her father not to send her into my room any more.

The Turin Jewess had given me some valuable hints as to the conduct of amours with Jewish girls. My theory was that Leah would be more easily won than she, for in Ancona there was much more liberty than in Turin. This was a rake's reasoning, but even rakes are mistaken sometimes.

The dinner that was served to me was very good, though cooked in the Jewish style, and Leah brought in the *foie gras* and sat down opposite to me with a muslin kerchief over her breast. The *foie gras* was excellent and we washed it down with copious libations of Scopolò, which Leah found very much to her taste. When the *foie gras* was finished, she got up, but I stopped her, for the dinner was only half over.

"I will stay then," she said, "but I am afraid my father will object."

"Very well. Call your master," I said to the maid, who came in at that moment. "I have a word to speak to him."

"My dear Mardocheus," I said when he came, "your daughter's appetite doubles mine and I shall be much obliged if you will allow her to keep me company whenever we have *foie gras*."

"It isn't to my profit to double your appetite but, if you are willing to pay double, I shall have no objection."

"Very well, that arrangement will suit me."

In evidence of my satisfaction, I gave him a bottle of Scopolio, which Leah guaranteed pure.

We dined together and, seeing that the wine was making her mirthful, I told her that her eyes were inflaming me and that she must let me kiss them.

"My duty obliges me to say 'nay.' No kissing and no touching; we have only to eat and drink together and I shall like it as much as you."

"You are cruel."

"I am wholly dependent on my father."

"Shall I ask your father to give you leave to be kind?"

"I don't think that would be proper and my father might be offended and not allow me to see you any more."

"And supposing he told you not to be scrupulous about trifles?"

"Then I should despise him and continue to do my duty."

So clear a declaration showed me that, if I persevered in this intrigue, I might go on forever without success. I also bethought me that I ran a risk of neglecting my chief business, which would not allow me to stay long in Ancona.

I said nothing more to Leah just then and, when the dessert came in, I gave her some Cyprus wine, which she declared was the most delicious nectar she had ever tasted.

I saw that the wine was heating her and it seemed incredible to me that Bacchus should reign without Venus; but she had a hard head; her blood was hot but her brain was cool.

However, I tried to seize her hand and kiss it, but she drew it away, saying pleasantly, "It's too much for honour and too little for love."

This witty remark amused me and it also showed me that she was not exactly a neophyte.

I determined to postpone matters till the next day and told her not to get me any supper, as I was supping with the Venetian consul. The consul had told me that he did not dine, but that he would always be delighted to see me at supper.

It was midnight when I came home and everyone was asleep except the maid who let me in. I gave her such a gratuity that she must have wished me to keep late hours for the rest of my stay. I proceeded to sound her about Leah, but she told me nothing but good. If she was to be believed, Leah was a good girl, always at work, loved by all and fancy-free. The maid could not have praised her better if she had been paid to do so.

In the morning Leah brought the chocolate and sat down on my bed, saying that we would have some fine *foie gras* and that she would have all the better appetite for dinner, as she had not taken any supper.

"Why didn't you take any supper?"

"I suppose it was because of your excellent Cyprus wine, to which my father has taken a great liking."

"Ah! he likes it? We will give him some."

Leah was in a state of undress, as before, and the sight of her half-covered spheres drove me to distraction.

"Are you not aware that you have a beautiful breast?" said I.

"I thought all young girls were just the same."

"Have you no suspicion that the sight is a very pleasant one for me?"

"If that be so, I am very glad, for I have nothing to be ashamed of, for a girl has no call to hide her bosom any more than her face, unless she is in grand company."

As she was speaking, Leah looked at a golden heart, transfixed with an arrow and set with small diamonds, which served me as a shirt stud.

"Do you like the little heart?" said I.

"Very much. Is it pure gold?"

"Certainly, and, that being so, I think I may offer it to you."

So saying, I took it off, but she thanked me politely and said that a girl who gave nothing must take nothing.

"Take it; I will never ask any favour of you."

"But I should be indebted to you and that's the reason why I never take anything."

I saw that there was nothing to be done, or rather that it would be necessary to do too much in order to do anything and that in any case the best plan would be to give her up.

I put aside all thoughts of violence, which would only anger her or make her laugh at me. I should either degrade myself or be rendered more amorous and all for nothing. If she should take offence, she would not come to see me any more and I should have no just grounds for complaint. In fine, I made up my mind to restrain myself and indulge no more in amorous talk.

We dined very pleasantly together. The servant brought in some shellfish, which are forbidden by the Mosaic law. While the maid was in the room, I asked Leah to take some and she refused indignantly; but, directly the girl was gone, she took some, of her own accord and ate them eagerly, assuring me that it was the first time she had had the pleasure of tasting shellfish.

"This girl," I said to myself, "who breaks the law of her religion with such levity, who likes pleasure and does not conceal it, this is the girl who wants to make me believe that she is insensible to the pleasures of love; that's impossible, though she may not love me. She must have some secret means of satisfying her passions, which in my opinion are very violent. We will see what can be done this evening with the help of a bottle of good muscat."

However, when the evening came, she said she could not drink or eat anything, as a meal always prevented her sleeping.

The next day she brought me my chocolate, but her beautiful breast was covered with a white kerchief. She sat down on the bed as usual

and I remarked in a melancholy manner that she had covered her breast only because I had said I took pleasure in seeing it. She replied that she had not thought of anything and had put on her kerchief only because she had had no time to fasten her stays.

"You are quite right," I said smilingly, "for, if I were to see the whole breast, I might not think it beautiful."

She gave me no answer and I finished my chocolate.

I recollected my collection of obscene pictures and begged Leah to give me the box, telling her that I would show her some of the most beautiful breasts in the world.

"I shan't care to see them," said she. But she gave me the box and sat down on my bed as before.

"My dear Leah, your sincerity is too much for me. You have too much good sense not to understand. Either be kind or visit me no more."

"You are very weak, I think."

"Yes, because I am strong."

"Then henceforth we shall meet only at dinner. But show me some more miniatures."

"I have some pictures you will not like."

"Let me see them."

I gave her Aretino's figures and was astonished to see how coolly she examined them, passing from one to the other in the most commonplace way.

"Do you think them interesting?" I said.

"Yes, very; they are so natural. But a good girl should not look at such pictures; anyone must be aware that these voluptuous attitudes excite one's emotions."

"I believe you, Leah, and I feel it as much as you."

She smiled and took the book away to the window, turning her back towards me, without taking any notice of my appeal. I had to dress myself and, when the hairdresser arrived, Leah went away, saying she would return me my book at dinner. I was delighted, thinking I was sure of victory either that day or the next, but I was out in my reckoning.

We dined well and drank better. At dessert, Leah took the book out of her pocket and set me all on fire by asking me to explain some of the pictures, but forbidding me, under pain of leaving me, to enliven the commentary with a practical demonstration. Out of patience, I took the book from her and went out, pinning my hopes to the hour when she should bring me my chocolate.

When the cruel Jewess came in the morning, she told me that she wanted explanations, but that I must use the pictures and nothing more as demonstration of my remarks.

"Certainly," I replied.

The lesson lasted two hours and a hundred times did I curse Aretino and my folly in showing her his designs for, whenever I made the slightest attempt, the pitiless woman threatened to leave me.

In my state of chronic irritation I felt much annoyed that there was no decent place in Ancona where a man might appease his passions for money. I trembled to see that I was falling really in love with Leah and I told the consul every day that I was in no hurry to go. I was as foolish as a boy in his calf-love. I pictured Leah as the purest of women for, with strong passions, she refused to gratify them. I saw in her a model of virtue; she was all self-restraint and purity, resisting temptation, in spite of the fire that consumed her. She had it in her own hands to make herself happy and yet she withstood the temptation for hours at a time in intimate conversation with a man of ardent temperament, heaping fuel on the fire which was devouring her, but strong enough to permit nothing. Oh, virtuous Leah! She exposed herself to defeat every day and warded it off only by never taking the first step.

Ni voir, ni toucher—that was her shield and buckler.

Before long the reader will discover how very virtuous Leah was.

After nine or ten days, I had recourse to violence, not in deeds but in words. She confessed I was in the right and said my best plan would be to forbid her to come to see me in the morning. At dinner, according to her, there would be no risk. I made up my mind to ask her to continue her visits, but to cover her breast and avoid all amorous conversation.

"With all my heart," the rogue replied, laughing. "But be sure I shall not be the first to violate the conditions."

I felt no inclination to violate them either, for three days later I felt weary of the situation and told the consul I would start at the first opportunity. My passion for Leah was spoiling my appetite and I thus saw myself deprived of my secondary pleasure, without any prospect of gaining my primary enjoyment.

After what I had said to the consul, I felt I should be bound to go and I went to bed calmly enough. But about two o'clock in the morning I had, contrary to my usual habit, to get up and offer sacrifice to Cloacina. I left my room without any candle, as I knew my way well enough about the house.

The temple of that goddess was on the ground floor but, as I had put on my soft slippers and walked very softly, my footsteps did not make the least noise.

On my way upstairs I saw a light shining through a chink in the door of a room which I knew to be unoccupied. I crept softly up, not dreaming for a moment that Leah could be there at such an hour. But, on putting my eye to the chink, I found I could see a bed and on it Leah and a young man, both stark naked.

Before long the fellow looked at his watch, pushed her away and began to put on his shirt. Leah was evidently angry and she did not make up her mind to cover her nakedness until she had spoken to him in a manner that showed me she was heaping reproaches on him.

When they were nearly clothed, I softly returned to my room and looked out of a window commanding the house-door. I had not to wait long before I saw the fortunate lover going out.

I went to bed, indignant with Leah; I felt myself degraded. She was no longer virtuous, but a villainous prostitute in my eyes and I fell asleep with the firm resolve of driving her from my room the next morning, after shaming her with the story of the scene I had witnessed. But, alas! hasty and angry resolves can seldom withstand a few hours' sleep.

As soon as I saw Leah coming in with my chocolate, smiling and gay as usual, I told her quite coolly all I had seen. I ended by saying that I hoped she would give me the next night.

She answered with perfect calm that I had nothing to expect from her, as she did not love me and, as for keeping the secret, she defied me to disclose it.

"I am sure you would not be guilty of such a disgraceful action," said she.

With these words, she turned her back on me and went out. I could not help confessing to myself that she was in the right; I could not bring myself to commit such a baseness. She had made me reasonable with a few words: "I don't love you." There was no reply to this and I felt I had no claim on her.

Rather it was she who might complain of me. What right had I to spy over her? I could not accuse her of deceiving me; she was free to do what she liked with herself. My best course was clearly to be silent.

I dressed hastily and went to the Exchange, where I heard that a vessel was sailing for Fiume the same day. Fiume is just opposite Ancona, on the other side of the gulf. From Fiume to Trieste, the distance is forty miles, and I decided to go by that route. I went aboard the ship and took the best place, said goodbye to the consul, paid Mardocheus and packed my trunks.

Leah heard that I was going the same day and came and told me she could not give me back my lace and my silk stockings that day, but that I could have them by the morrow.

"Your father," I replied, coolly, "will hand them all over to the Venetian consul, who will send them to me at Trieste."

Just as I was sitting down to dinner, the captain of the boat came with a sailor for my luggage. I told him he could have my trunk and that I would bring the rest aboard whenever he wished to set sail.

"I intend setting out an hour before dusk."

"I shall be ready."

When Mardocheus heard where I was going, he begged me to take charge of a small box and a letter he wanted to send to a friend.

"I shall be delighted to do you this small service."

At dinner Leah sat down with me and chattered as usual without troubling herself about my monosyllabic answers. I suppose she wished me to credit her with calm confidence and philosophy, while I looked upon it all as brazen impudence, I hated and despised her. She had inflamed my passions, told me to my face she did not love me and seemed to claim my respect through it all. Possibly she expected me

to be grateful for her remark that she believed me incapable of betraying her to her father.

As she drank my Scopolio, she said there were several bottles left, as well as some muscat.

"I make you a present of it all," I replied. "It will prime you for your nocturnal orgies."

She smiled and said I had had a gratuitous sight of a spectacle which was worth money and that, if I were not going so suddenly, she would gladly have given me another opportunity. This piece of impudence made me want to break the wine bottle on her head. She must have known what I was going to do, from the way I took it up, but she did not waver for a moment. This coolness of hers prevented my committing a crime.

I contented myself with saying that she was the most impudent slut I had ever met, and I poured the wine into my glass with a shaking hand, as if that were the purpose for which I had taken up the bottle.

After this scene, I got up and went into the next room; nevertheless in half an hour she came to take coffee with me. This persistence of hers disgusted me, but I calmed myself with the reflection that her conduct must be dictated by vengeance.

"I should like to help you pack," said she.

"And I should like to be left alone," I replied. And, taking her by the arm, I led her out of the room and locked the door after her.

We were both of us in the right. Leah had deceived and humiliated me and I had reason to detest her, while I had disclosed her as a monster of hypocrisy and immodesty and this was good cause for her to dislike me.

Towards evening two sailors came after the rest of the luggage and, thanking my hostess, I told Leah to put up my linen and give it to her father, who had taken down to the vessel the box which I was to carry to his friend.

We set sail with a fair wind and I thought never to set my eyes on Leah again. But Fate had ordered otherwise.

We had gone twenty miles with a good wind in our quarter, by which we were borne gently from wave to wave, when all of a sudden there fell a dead calm. These rapid changes are common enough in the Adriatic, especially in the part we were in. The calm lasted but a short time and a stiff wind from the west-north-west began to blow, with the result that the sea became very rough and I was very ill.

At midnight, the storm had become dangerous. The captain told me that, if we persisted in going in the wind's eye, we should be wrecked and that the only thing to do was to return to Ancona. In less than three hours, we made the harbour and the officer of the guard, having recognised me, kindly allowed me to land. While I was talking to him, the sailors took my trunks and carried them to my old lodgings, without waiting to ask my leave.

I was vexed. I wanted to avoid Leah and I had intended to sleep at the nearest inn. However, there was no help for it. When I arrived,

the Jew got up and said he was delighted to see me again. It was past three o'clock in the morning and I felt very ill, so I said I would not get up till late and would dine in bed, without any *foie gras*. I slept ten hours and, when I awoke, I felt hungry and rang my bell.

The maid answered and said that she would have the honour of waiting on me, as Leah had a violent headache. I made no answer, thanking Providence for delivering me from this impudent and dangerous woman.

Having found my dinner rather spare, I told the cook to get me a good supper.

The weather was dreadful. The Venetian consul had heard of my return and, not having seen me, concluded I was ill, and paid me a two hours' visit. He assured me the storm would last for a week at least. I was very sorry to hear it, in the first place because I did not want to see any more of Leah, and in the second because I had no money. Luckily, I had valuable effects, so this second consideration did not trouble me much.

As I did not see Leah at supper-time, I imagined that she was feigning illness to avoid meeting me, and I felt very much obliged to her on this account. As it appeared, however, I was entirely mistaken in my conjectures.

The next day, she came in her usual way to ask for chocolate to prepare my breakfast, but she no longer bore upon her features her old tranquillity of expression.

"I will take coffee, mademoiselle," I observed, "and, as I do not want *foie gras* any longer, I will take dinner by myself. Consequently, you may tell your father that I shall pay only seven pauls a day. In future, I shall drink only Orvieto wine."

"You have still four bottles of Scopolio and Cyprus."

"I never take back a present; the wine belongs to you. I shall be obliged by your leaving me alone as much as possible, as your conduct is enough to irritate Socrates and I am no Socrates. Besides, the very sight of you is disagreeable to me. Your body may be beautiful but, knowing that the soul within is a monster, it charms me no longer. You may be very sure that the sailors brought my luggage here without my orders or else you would never have seen me here again, where I dread being poisoned every day."

Leah went out without giving me any answer and I felt certain that, after my plain-spoken discourse, she would take care not to trouble me again.

Experience had taught me that girls like Leah are not uncommon. I had known specimens at Spa, Genoa, London and Venice, but this Jewess was the worst I had ever met.

It was Saturday. When Mardocheus came back from the synagogue, he asked me gaily why I had humiliated his daughter, as she had declared she had done nothing to offend me.

"I did not humiliate her, my dear Mardocheus, or, at all events, such was not my intention; but, as I have put myself on a diet, I shall

be eating no more *foi gras* and consequently I shall dine by myself and save three pauls a day."

"Leah is quite ready to pay me out of her private purse and she wants to dine with you to show you that you need not fear being poisoned, as she informs me that you have expressed that fear."

"That was only a jest; I am perfectly aware that I am in the house of an honest man. I don't want your daughter to pay for herself and, to prove that I am not actuated by ideas of economy, you shall dine with me, too. To offer to pay in my stead is an impertinence on her part. In fine, I will either dine by myself and pay you seven pauls a day, or I will pay you thirteen and have both father and daughter to dine with me."

The worthy Mardocheus went away, saying that he really could not allow me to dine by myself.

At dinner-time I talked only to Mardocheus without glancing at Leah or paying any attention to the witty sallies she uttered to attract me. I drank only Orvieto.

At dessert Leah filled my glass with Scopolio, saying that, if I did not drink it, neither would she. I replied, without looking at her, that I advised her to drink only water in future and that I wanted nothing at her hands. Mardocheus, who liked wine, laughed and said I was right and drank for three.

The weather continued bad and I spent the rest of the day in writing and after supper retired and went to sleep.

Suddenly I was aroused by a slight noise.

"Who is there?" said I.

I heard Leah's voice, whispering in reply, "'Tis I; I have not come to disturb you, but to justify myself."

I was pleased with this extraordinary visit, for my sole desire was for vengeance and I felt certain of being able to resist all her arts. I therefore told her rather politely enough that I considered her as already justified and would be obliged by her leaving me, as I wanted to go to sleep.

"Not before you have heard what I have to say."

"Go on; I am listening to you."

Thereupon, she began a discourse which I did not interrupt and which lasted for a good hour.

She spoke very artfully and, after confessing she had done wrong, she said that at my age I should have been ready to overlook the follies of a young and passionate girl. According to her, it was all weakness and pardonable at such an age.

"I swear I love you," said she, "and I would have given you good proof before now if I had not been so unfortunate as to love the young Christian you saw me with, while he does not care for me in the least; indeed, I have to pay him."

"In spite of my passion," she continued, "I have not seen him for six months and it was your fault that I sent for him."

The end of it all was that I ought to forget everything and treat her kindly during the few days I was to remain there.

When she finished, I did not allow myself to make any objection. I pretended to be convinced, assuring her that I felt I had been in the wrong in letting her see Aretino's figures and that I would no longer evince any resentment towards her.

As her explanation did not seem likely to end in the way she wished, she went on talking about the weakness of the flesh, the strength of self-love, which often hushes the voice of passion, etc., etc., her aim being to persuade me that she loved me and that her refusals had all been given with the idea of making my love the stronger.

No doubt I might have given her a great many answers, but I said nothing. I made up my mind to await the assault that I saw was impending and then, by refusing all her advances, I reckoned on abasing her to the uttermost. Nevertheless, she made no motion; her hands were at rest and she kept her face at a due distance from mine.

At last, tired out with the struggle, she left me, pretending to be perfectly satisfied with what she had done.

As soon as she had gone, I congratulated myself on the fact that she had confined herself to verbal persuasion for, if she had gone further, she would probably have achieved a complete victory, though we were in the dark.

I must mention that, before she left me, I had to promise to allow her to make my chocolate as usual.

Early the next morning she came for the stick of chocolate. She was in a complete state of *négligé* and came in on tiptoe, though, if she had chosen to look towards the bed, she could have seen that I was wide awake.

I marked her artifices and her cunning and resolved to be equal to all her wiles. When she brought the chocolate, I noticed that there were two cups on the tray and I said, "Then it is not true that you don't like chocolate?"

"I feel obliged to relieve you of all fear of being poisoned."

I noticed that she was now dressed with the utmost decency, while half an hour before she had had only her chemise and petticoat, her bosom being perfectly bare.

The more resolved she seemed to gain the victory, the more firmly I was determined to humiliate her, as it appeared to me the only other alternative would be my shame and dishonour and this turned me to stone.

In spite of my resolve, Leah renewed the attack at dinner for, contrary to my orders, she served a magnificent *foie gras*, telling me it was for herself and that, if she were poisoned, she would die with pleasure; Mardocheus said he would like to die, too, and began regaling himself on it, with evident relish.

I could not help laughing and announced my wish to taste the deadly food and so we all of us ate of it.

"Your resolves are not strong enough to withstand seduction," said Leah.

This remark piqued me and I answered that she was imprudent to disclose her designs in such a manner and that she would find my resolves strong enough when the time came. A faint smile played about her lips.

"Try if you like," I said, "to persuade me to drink some Scopolio or muscat. I meant to take some, but your taunt has turned me to steel. I mean to prove that, when I make up my mind, I never alter it."

"The strong-minded man never gives way," said Leah, "but the good-hearted man often lets himself be over-persuaded."

"Quite so, and the good-hearted girl refrains from taunting a man on his weakness for her."

I called the maid and told her to go to the Venetian consul's and get me some more Scopolio and muscat. Leah piqued me once more by saying enthusiastically, "I am sure you are the most good-hearted of men, as well as the firmest."

Mardocheus, who could not make out what we meant, ate, drank and laughed and seemed pleased with everything.

In the afternoon I went out to a café, in spite of the dreadful weather. I thought over Leah and her designs, feeling certain that she would pay me another nocturnal visit and renew the assault in force. I resolved to weaken myself with some common woman if I could find one at all bearable.

A Greek, who had taken me to a disgusting place a few days before, conducted me to another, where he introduced me to a painted horror of a woman, from whose very sight I fled in terror.

Vexed that in a town like Ancona a man of some delicacy could not by dint of money satisfy an urgent need, I decided to return to my lodging, where, after supping alone, as was my wont, I resolved to lock myself in, a thing I had done but twice before.

This precaution, however, was useless. A few minutes after I had shut the door, Leah knocked, on the pretext that I had forgotten to give her the chocolate. I opened the door and gave it to her and she begged me not to lock myself in, as she wanted to have an important and final interview.

"You can tell me now what you want to say."

"No, it will take some time and I should not like to come till everyone is asleep. You have nothing to be afraid of; you are master of yourself. You can go to bed in peace."

"I have certainly nothing to be afraid of and, to prove it to you, I will leave the door open."

I felt more than ever certain of victory and resolved not to blow out the candles, as my doing so might be interpreted as a confession of fear. Besides, the light would render my triumph and her humiliation more complete. With these thoughts, I went to bed. At eleven o'clock a slight noise told me that my hour had come. I saw Leah enter my room....

Then she left me, full of gratitude and I slept straight through till twelve o'clock.

When I awoke and saw her standing by my bedside, with the gentle love of the day after the wedding, the idea of my approaching departure saddened me. I told her so and she begged me to stay on as long as I could. I repeated that we would arrange everything when we met again that night.

We had a delicious dinner, for Mardocheus was bent on convincing me that he was no miser.

I spent the afternoon with the consul and arranged that I should go on a Neapolitan man-of-war, which was in quarantine at the time and was to sail for Trieste. As I should thus be obliged to pass another month in Ancona, I blessed the storm that had driven me back.

I gave the consul the gold snuffbox with which the Elector of Cologne had presented me, keeping the portrait as a memento. Three days later, he handed me in return forty gold sequins, which was ample for my needs.

My stay in Ancona was costing me dear; but, when I told Mardocheus that I should not be going for another month, he declared he would no longer feed at my expense. Of course, I did not insist. Leah dined with me alone.

It has always been my opinion, though perhaps I may be mistaken, that the Jew was perfectly well aware of my relations with his daughter. Jews are usually very liberal on this article, possibly because they count on the child being an Israelite. I took care that my dear Leah should have no reason to repent of our connection.

How grateful and affectionate she was when I told her that I meant to stay another month! How she blessed the bad weather which had driven me back!

We slept together every night, not excepting those nights forbidden by the laws of Moses.

I gave this charming girl the little gold heart which had given rise to our first amorous discussions and which was worth maybe ten sequins, but she refused any recompense for the care she had taken of my linen. She also made me accept some splendid Indian handkerchiefs. Six years later I met her again at Pesaro and I will speak of that when I get to it.

I left Ancona on November 14th and on the 15th I was lodged at the Grande Auberge in Trieste.

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THE landlord asked me my name, we made our agreement and I found myself very comfortably lodged. The next day I went to the post-office and found several letters which had been awaiting me for the last month. I opened one from M. Dandolo and found an open enclosure from the patrician Marco Dona, addressed to Baron Pittoni, Chief of Police. On

reading it, I found I was very warmly commended to the baron. I hastened to call on him and gave him the letter, which he took but did not read. He told me that M. Dona had written to him about me and that he would be delighted to do anything in his power for me.

I then took Mardocheus's letter to his friend, Moses Levi. I had not the slightest idea that the letter had any reference to myself, so I gave it to the first clerk I saw in the office.

Levi was an honest and agreeable man and the next day he called on me and offered me his services in the most cordial manner. He showed me the letter I had delivered, and I was delighted to find that it related solely to me. The worthy Mardocheus begged him to give me a hundred sequins in case I needed any money, adding that any politeness shown to me would be as if shown to himself.

This behaviour on the part of Mardocheus filled me with gratitude and reconciled me, so to speak, with the whole Jewish nation. I wrote him a letter of thanks, offering to serve him in Venice in any way I could.

I could not help comparing the cordiality of Levi's welcome with the formal and ceremonious reception of Baron Pittoni. The baron was ten or twelve years younger than I. He was a man of parts and quite devoid of prejudice. A sworn foe of *meum* and *tuum* and wholly incapable of economy, he left the whole care of his house to his valet, who robbed him; but the baron knew it and made no objection. He was a determined bachelor, a gallant and the friend and patron of libertines. His chief defect was his forgetfulness and absence of mind, which made him mismanage important business.

He was reputed, though wrongly, to be a liar. A liar is a person who tells falsehoods intentionally, while, if Pittoni told lies, it was because he had forgotten the truth. We became good friends in the course of a month and we have remained friends to this day.

I wrote to my friends in Venice, announcing my arrival in Trieste, and for the next ten days I kept my room, busied in putting together the notes I had made on Polish events since the death of Elizabeth Petrovna. I meant to write a history of the troubles of unhappy Poland up to its dismemberment, which was taking place at the epoch in which I was writing.

I had foreseen all this when the Polish Diet recognised the dying Czarina as Empress of All the Russias and the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia and I proceeded with my history; but only the first three volumes were published, owing to the printer's breaking the agreement. The last four volumes will be found in manuscript after my death and anyone who likes may publish them. But I have become indifferent to all this, as to many other matters, since I have seen Folly crowned king of the earth.

To-day, there is no such country as Poland, but it might still be in existence if it had not been for the ambition of the Czartoryski family, whose pride had been humiliated by Count Brühl, the prime minister. To gain vengeance, Prince Augustus Czartoryski ruined his country.

He was so blinded by passion that he forgot that all actions have their inevitable results.

. Czartoryski had determined not only to exclude the House of Saxony from the succession, but to dethrone the member of that family who was reigning. To do this, the help of the Czarina and of the Elector of Brandenburg was necessary, so he made the Polish Diet acknowledge the one as Empress of All the Russias, and the other as King of Prussia. The two sovereigns would not treat with the Polish Commonwealth till this claim had been satisfied; but the Commonwealth should never have granted these titles, for Poland itself possessed most of the Russias and was the true sovereign of Prussia, the Elector of Brandenburg being in reality only Duke of Prussia.

Prince Czartoryski, blinded by the desire of vengeance, persuaded the Diet that to give the two sovereigns these titles would be merely a form and that they would never become anything more than honorary. This might be so, but, if Poland had possessed far-seeing statesmen, they would have guessed that an honorary title would end in the usurpation of the whole country.

The Russian palatine, who should be execrated by his native country, had the pleasure of seeing his nephew, Stanislas Poniatowski, on the throne.

I myself told him that these titles gave a right and that the promise not to make any use of them was a mere delusion. I added jokingly—for I was obliged to adopt a humorous tone—that before long Europe would take pity on Poland, which had to bear the heavy weight of all the Russias and the kingdom of Prussia as well, and the Commonwealth would find itself relieved of all these charges.

My prophecy has been fulfilled. The two princes whose titles were allowed have torn Poland limb from limb; it is now absorbed in Russia and Prussia.

The second great mistake made by Poland was in not remembering the apologue of the man and the horse, when the question of protection presented itself.

The Republic of Rome became mistress of the world by protecting other nations, as a prelude to taking them over.

Does one ever see sovereigns hesitate an instant to grant protection to countries that ask it? No, for they well know that it is the first step and that all the rest will follow. The guardian soon makes himself the father, and then the master, of his ward, if only to take care of the patrimony of the latter. It was thus that my dear mistress, the Republic of Venice, got possession of the kingdom of Cyprus, later taken from her by the Grand Turk, who coveted the good wine of that country, although the Koran forbids its use.

To-day, Venice lives only to her own eternal shame.

Thus Poland came to ruin through ambition, vengeance and folly—but folly most of all.

The same reason lay at the root of the French Revolution. Louis XVI paid the penalty of his folly with his life. If he had been a wise ruler,

he would still be on the throne and France would have escaped the horrors into which she was plunged by the fury of a band of criminals, the cowardice and perversity of the nobles and the avarice of a despotic, fanatical and too powerful clergy.

France is sick; in any other country, this sickness could easily be remedied, but I should not wonder if it proved incurable in France. Posterity will know; as for me, I am too old.

Certain emotional persons are moved to pity by the French *émigrés* but, for my part I think them worthy only of contempt. Instead of parading their pride and their disgrace before the eyes of foreign nations, they should have rallied round their king and either saved the throne or died under its ruins. What will become of France? It were hard to say; but it is certain that a body without a head cannot live very long, for reason is situate in the head.

On December 1st, Baron Pittoni begged me to call on him, as someone had come from Venice on purpose to see me. I dressed hastily and went to the baron's house, where I saw a fine-looking man of thirty-five or forty, elegantly dressed. He looked at me with the liveliest interest.

"My heart tells me," I began, "that Your Excellence's name is Zaguri."

"Exactly so, my dear Casanova. As soon as my friend Dandolo told me of your arrival here, I determined to come and congratulate you on your approaching recall, which will take place either this year or the next, as I hope to see two friends of mine made Inquisitors. You may judge of my friendship for you when I tell you that I am an *avogador* and that there is a law forbidding such to leave Venice. We will spend to-day and to-morrow together."

I replied in a manner to convince him that I was touched by the honour he had done me, and I heard Baron Pittoni begging me to excuse him for not having come to see me. He said he had forgotten all about it and a handsome old man begged His Excellence to ask me to dine with him, though he had not the pleasure of knowing me.

"What!" said Zaguri, "Casanova has been here for the last ten days and the Venetian consul does not know him?"

I hastened to speak.

"It's my own fault," I observed. "I did not like calling on this gentleman, for fear he might think me contraband."

The consul answered wittily that I was not contraband but in quarantine, pending my return to my native land, and that in the meanwhile his house would always be open to me, as had been the house of the Venetian consul in Ancona. In this manner he let me know that he knew something about me, and I was not at all sorry for it.

Marco Monti, such was the consul's name, was a man of parts and much experience, a pleasant companion and a great conversationalist, fond of telling amusing stories and with a grave face—in fact, most excellent company.

I was something of a *raconteur* myself and we soon became friendly rivals in telling anecdotes. In spite of his thirty additional years, I was a tolerable match for him and, when we were in a room, there was no question of gaming to kill the time.

We became fast friends and I benefited a good deal by his offices during the two years I spent in Trieste, and I have always thought that he had a considerable share in obtaining my recall. That was my great object in those days; I was a victim of nostalgia, or homesickness.

With the Swiss and the Sclavs it is really a fatal disease, which carries them off if they are not sent home immediately. Germans are subject to this weakness also; whilst the French suffer very little, and Italians not much more, from the complaint.

No rule, however, lacks its exceptions, and I was one. I daresay I should have gotten over my nostalgia if I had treated it with contempt and then I should not have wasted nine years of my life in the bosom of my cruel stepmother, Venice.

I dined with M. Zaguri at the consul's and was invited to dine with the governor, Count Auersberg, the next day. The visit from a Venetian *avogador* made me a person of great consideration. I was no longer looked upon as an exile, but as one who had successfully escaped from illegal confinement.

The day after I accompanied M. de Zaguri to Gorizia, where he stayed three days to enjoy the hospitality of the nobility. I was included in all their invitations and I saw that a stranger could live very pleasantly there.

I met there a certain Count Cobentzl, who may still be alive—a man of wisdom, generosity and the vastest learning and yet without any kind of pretension. He gave a State dinner to M. Zaguri and I had the pleasure of meeting there three or four most charming ladies. I also met Count Torres, a Spaniard, whose father was in the Austrian service. He had married at sixty and had five children, all as ugly as himself. His daughter was a charming girl, in spite of her plainness; she evidently got her character from the mother's side. The eldest son, who was ugly and squinted, was a kind of pleasant madman, but he was also a liar, a profligate, a boaster and totally devoid of discretion. In spite of these defects, he was much sought after in society, as he told a good tale and made people laugh. If he had been a student, he would have been a distinguished scholar, as his memory was prodigious. He it was who vainly guaranteed the agreement I made with Valerio Valeri for printing my *History of Poland*. I also met at Gorizia a Count Coronini, who was known in learned circles as the author of some Latin treatises on diplomacy. Nobody read his books, but everybody agreed that he was a very learned man.

I also met a young man named Morelli, who had written a history of the place and was on the point of publishing the first volume. He gave me his manuscript, begging me to make any corrections that struck me as desirable. I succeeded in pleasing him, as I gave him back

his work without a single note or alteration of any kind, and thus he became my friend.

I became a great friend of Count Francis-Charles Coronini, who was a man of talents. He had married a Belgian lady but, not being able to agree, they had separated and he passed his time in trifling intrigues, hunting and reading the papers, literary and political. He laughed at those sages who declared that there was not one really happy person in the world, and he supported his denial by the unanswerable dictum, "I myself am perfectly happy."

However, as he died of a tumour in the head at the age of thirty-five, he probably acknowledged his mistake in the agonies of death.

There is no such thing as a perfectly happy or perfectly unhappy man in the world. One man has more happiness in his life and another more unhappiness and the same circumstance may produce widely different effects on individuals of different temperaments. It is not a fact that virtue ensures happiness, for the exercise of some virtues implies suffering and suffering is incompatible with happiness.

My readers will be the first to understand that I am not one to consider mental pleasure pre-eminent. We are too much of the flesh for the pleasures of the mind to be all-sufficient. However much the conscience may be at peace, I do not see how that can bring happiness to a hungry man or to one whose bowels are being racked with colic.

Baron Pittoni and I escorted M. Zaguri to the Venetian border and we then returned to Trieste together.

In three or four days Pittoni took me everywhere, including the club, where none but persons of distinction were admitted. This club was held at the inn where I was staying.

Amongst the ladies, the most noteworthy was the wife of the merchant, David Picquelin, a Swabian by birth, but established at Trieste. She was a Lutheran and came from Venice, daughter of a German banker.

Pittoni was in love with her and continued so till her death. His suit lasted twelve years and, like Petrarch, he still sighed, still hoped, but never succeeded. Her name was Zanetta and, besides her beauty, she had the charm of being an exquisite singer and a polished hostess. Still more noteworthy, however, was the unvarying sweetness and equability of her disposition.

I did not need to know her long before recognising that she was absolutely impregnable. I told Pittoni so, but all in vain; he still fed on empty hope.

Zanetta had very poor health, though no one would have judged so from her appearance, but it was well known to be the case. She died at an early age.

A few days after M. Zaguri's departure, I had a note from the consul, informing me that the procurator Morosini was stopping at my inn and advising me to call on him if I knew him.

I was infinitely obliged for this advice, for M. Morosini was a personage of the greatest importance. He had known me from childhood

and the reader may remember that he had presented me to Marshal Richelieu at Fontainebleau in 1750.

I dressed as if I had been about to speak to a monarch and sent in a note to his room. I had not long to wait; he came out and welcomed me most graciously, telling me how delighted he was to see me again. When he heard the reason of my being in Trieste and how I desired to return to my country, he assured me he would do all in his power to obtain me my wish. He thanked me for the care I had taken of his nephew in Florence, and kept me all the day, while I told him my principal adventures.

He was glad to hear that M. Zaguri was working for me, and said that they must concert the matter together. He commended me warmly to the consul, who was delighted to be able to inform the Tribunal of the consideration with which M. Morosini treated me.

After the procurator had gone, I began to enjoy life in Trieste, but in strict moderation and with due regard for economy, for I had only fifteen sequins a month. I abjured play altogether.

Every day I dined with one of the circle of my friends, who were the Venetian consul, the French consul (an eccentric but worthy man, who kept a good cook), Pittoni (who kept an excellent table, thanks to his man, who knew what was to his own interest) and several others.

As for the pleasures of love, I enjoyed them in moderation, taking care of my purse and of my health.

Towards the end of the carnival, I went to a masked ball at the theatre and, in the course of the evening, a Harlequin came up and presented his Columbine to me. They both began to play tricks on me. I was pleased with the Columbine and felt a strong desire to be acquainted with her. After some vain researches, the French consul, M. de Saint-Sauveur, told me that the Harlequin was a young lady of rank and the Columbine a handsome young man.

"If you like," he added, "I will introduce you to the Harlequin's family and I am sure you will appreciate her charms when you see her as a girl."

As they persisted in their jokes, I was able, without wounding decency overmuch, to convince myself that the consul was right on the question of sex and, when the ball was over, I said I should be obliged by his introducing me, as he had promised. He promised to do so the day after Ash Wednesday.

Thus I made the acquaintance of Madame Léo, who was still pretty and agreeable, though she had lived very freely in her younger days. There were her husband, a son and six daughters, all handsome, but especially the Harlequin, with whom I was much taken. Naturally I fell in love with her but, as I was her senior by thirty years and had begun my addresses in a tone of fatherly affection, a feeling of shame prevented my disclosing to her the real state of my heart. Four years later she told me herself that she had guessed my real feelings and had been amused by my foolish restraint.

A young girl learns deeper lessons from nature than we men can acquire with all our experience.

After Easter of 1773 Count Auersberg, the Governor of Trieste, was recalled to Vienna and Count Wagensberg took his place. His eldest daughter, the Countess Lantieri, who was a great beauty, inspired me with a passion which would have made me unhappy if I had not succeeded in hiding it under a veil of the profoundest respect.

I celebrated the accession of the new governor by some verses, which I had printed and in which, while lauding the father, I paid conspicuous homage to the charms of the daughter.

My tribute pleased them and I became an intimate friend of the count. He placed confidence in me, with the idea of my using it to my own advantage for, though he did not say so openly, I divined his intention.

The Venetian consul had told me that he had been vainly endeavouring for four years to get the Government of Trieste to arrange for the weekly diligence from Trieste to Mestre to pass by Udine, the capital of the Venetian Friuli.

"This alteration," he had said, "would greatly benefit the commerce of the two states, but the Municipal Council of Trieste opposes it, for a plausible but ridiculous reason."

These councillors, in the depth of their wisdom, said that, if the Venetian Republic desired the alteration, it would evidently be to their advantage and consequently to the disadvantage of Trieste.

The consul assured me that, if I could in any way obtain the concession, it would weigh strongly in my favour with the State Inquisitors and, even in the event of my non-success, he would represent my exertions in the most favourable light. I promised I would think the matter over.

Finding myself high in the governor's favour, I took the opportunity of addressing him on the subject. He had heard about the matter and thought the objection of the Town Council absurd and even monstrous, but he professed his inability to do anything himself.

"Councillor Rizzi," said he, "is the most obstinate of them all and has led astray the rest with his sophisms. But do you send me in a memorandum, showing that the alteration will have a much better effect on the large commerce of Trieste than on the comparatively trifling trade of Udine. I will send it to the Council, without disclosing the authorship, but backing it with my authority and challenging the opposition to refute your arguments. Finally, if they do not decide reasonably, I shall proclaim before them all my intention to send the memoir to Vienna with my opinion on it."

I felt confident of success and wrote out a memoir, full of incontrovertible reasons in favour of the proposed change.

My arguments gained the victory; the Council were persuaded and Count Wagensberg handed me the decree, which I immediately laid before the Venetian consul. Following his advice, I wrote to the

secretary of the Tribunal to the effect that I was happy to have given the Government a proof of my zeal and an earnest of my desire to be useful to my country and worthy of being recalled.

Out of regard for me, the count delayed the promulgation of the decree for a week, so that the people of Udine heard the news from Venice before it had reached Trieste and everybody thought that the Venetian Government had achieved its ends by bribery. The secretary of the Tribunal did not answer my letter, but he wrote to the consul ordering him to give me a hundred ducats and to inform me that this present was to encourage me to serve the Republic. He added that I might hope great things from the mercy of the Inquisitors if I succeeded in negotiating the Armenian difficulty.

The consul gave me the requisite information and my impression was that my efforts would be in vain; however, I resolved to make the attempt.

Four Armenian monks had left the Convent of St. Lazarus in Venice, having found the abbot's tyranny unbearable. They had wealthy relatives in Constantinople and laughed to scorn the excommunication of their late tyrant. They sought asylum in Vienna, promising to make themselves useful to the State by establishing an Armenian press to furnish all the Armenian convents with books. They engaged to sink a capital of a million florins if they were allowed to settle in Austria, found their press and buy or build a convent, where they proposed to live in community but without any abbot.

As might be expected, the Austrian Government did not hesitate to grant their request, it did more, it gave them special privileges.

The purpose of this arrangement was to deprive Venice of a lucrative trade and establish it in the Emperor's dominions. Consequently, the Viennese Court sent them to Trieste with a strong recommendation to the governor and they had been there for the past six months.

The Venetian Government, of course, wished keenly to win them back to Venice and had induced their late abbot to make handsome offers to them, but in vain. The Inquisitors then proceeded by indirect means, endeavouring to stir up obstacles in their way and disgust them with Trieste.

The consul told me plainly that he had not touched the matter, thinking success to be out of the question, and he predicted that, if I attempted it, I should find myself in the dilemma of having to solve the insoluble.

I felt the force of the consul's remark when I reflected that I could not rely on the governor's assistance or even speak to him on the subject. I saw that I must not let him suspect my design for, besides his duty to his Government, he was a devoted friend to the interests of Trieste and for this reason a great patron of the monks.

In spite of these obstacles, my nostalgia made me make acquaintance with these monks, under pretence of inspecting their Armenian types, which they were already casting. In a week or ten days I became quite intimate with them. One day I said that they were bound in honour

to return to the obedience of their abbot, if only to annul his sentence of excommunication.

The most obstinate of them told me that the abbot had behaved more like a despot than a father and had thus absolved them from their obedience.

"Besides," he said, "no rascally priest has any right to cut off good Christians from communion with the Saviour and we are sure that our patriarch will give us absolution and send us some more monks."

I could make no objection to these arguments; however, I asked on another occasion on what conditions they would return to Venice. The most sensible of them said that, in the first place, the abbot must withdraw the four hundred thousand ducats which he had entrusted to the Marquis Serpos at four per cent. This sum was the capital from which the income of the Convent of St. Lazarus was derived. The abbot had no right whatever to dispose of it, even with the consent of a majority among the monks. If the marquis became bankrupt, the convent would be utterly destitute. The marquis was an Armenian diamond merchant and a great friend of the abbot.

I then asked the monks what were the other conditions and they replied that these were some matters of discipline which might easily be settled; they would give me a written statement of their grievances as soon as I could assure them that the Marquis Serpos was no longer in possession of their funds.

I embodied my negotiations in writing and sent the document to the Inquisitors by the consul. In six weeks I received an answer to the effect that the abbot saw his way to arranging the money difficulty but must see a statement of the reforms demanded before doing so.

This decided me to have nothing to do with the affair, but a few words from Count Wagensberg made me throw it up without further delay. He gave me to understand that he knew of my attempts to reconcile the four monks with their abbot and he told me that he had been sorry to hear the report, as my success would do harm to a country where I lived and where I was treated as a friend.

I immediately told him the whole story, assuring him that I would never have begun the negotiation if I had not been certain of failure, for I heard on undoubted authority that Serpos could not possibly restore the four hundred thousand ducats. This explanation thoroughly dissipated any cloud that might have arisen between us.

The Armenians bought Councillor Rizzi's house for thirty thousand florins. Here they established themselves and I visited them from time to time without saying anything more about Venice.

Count Wagensberg gave me another proof of his friendship. Unhappily for me, he died during the autumn of the same year, at the age of fifty.

One morning he summoned me and I found him perusing a document he had just received from Vienna. He told me he was sorry I did not read German but that he would tell me the contents of the paper.

"Here," he continued, "you will be able to serve your country

without in any way injuring Austria. I am going to confide in you a state secret (it being understood, of course, that my name is never to be mentioned) which ought to be greatly to your advantage, whether you succeed or fail; at all hazards your patriotism, your prompt action and your cleverness in obtaining such information will be made manifest. Remember, you must never divulge your sources of information; only tell your government that you are perfectly sure of the authenticity of the statement you make.

"You must know," he continued, "that all the commodities we export to Lombardy pass through Venice, where they have to pay duty. Such has long been the custom and it may still be so if the Venetian Government will consent to reduce the duty of four per cent to two.

"A plan has been brought to the notice of the Austrian Court and it has been eagerly accepted. I have received certain orders on the matter, which I shall put into execution without giving any warning to the Venetian Government. In future, all goods for Lombardy will be embarked here and disembarked at Mezzola without touching the territory of the Republic. Mezzola belongs to the Duke of Modena; a ship can cross the gulf in one night and our goods will be placed in storehouses which will be erected. In this way, we shall shorten the journey and decrease the freights and the Modenese Government will be satisfied with a trifling sum, barely equivalent to a fourth of what we pay to Venice.

"In spite of all this, I feel sure that, if the Venetian Government wrote to the Austrian Council of Commerce, expressing their willingness to take two per cent henceforth, the proposal would be accepted, for we Austrians dislike novelties.

"I shall not lay the matter before the Town Council for four or five days, as there is no hurry for us; but you had better make haste, that you may be the first to inform your Government of the matter.

"If everything goes as I should wish, I hope to receive an order from Vienna, suspending the decree, just as I am about to make it public."

I soon saw of what advantage this secret would be to me, for it was the hobby of the State Inquisitors to have the first information of everything. They obtained this by a vast army of well paid spies. I expressed my gratitude to the count and told him that I would write out my report and send it by express to the State Inquisitors after he had read it.

"I shall be very glad to read it," he replied.

For once in my life I had no dinner and in four or five hours I had made a rough draft and a fair copy, which I took to His Excellency, who was delighted with the promptness I had displayed. He told me I had expressed the matter admirably and I then went to the consul and gave him the document to seal, without any preliminary explanation.

When he had perused it, he looked at me in astonishment.

"Are you quite sure," said he, "that all this is not a myth? I really

don't believe in it, for I have not heard a word of this and nobody in Trieste knows anything about it."

"I will answer for the truth of every word with my life, but I cannot disclose the source of my information."

He thought the matter over for some minutes and said:

"If I am to send this letter with official knowledge of what it contains, I must send it to my masters, the Council of Commerce, and not to the State Inquisitors. But what you want is to send it to the Tribunal, so do you seal the letter and give it to me with a polite note, begging me to remit it to the State Inquisitors."

"Why do you wish me to show this lack of confidence in you?"

"Because, if I was supposed to be aware of the contents of your letter, I should have to answer for the truth of it and this might involve me in trouble with the Board of Trade, whose servant I am. It is to my interest and your own that I should remain in ignorance of the affair till it is brought before me in official manner. It strikes me that, if it be a true report, the governor must know of it and that in a week's time it will not be a secret to anyone. I shall then report it to the board and my duty will be done."

"Then I may send in my report directly, without placing it in your hands?"

"No, for in the first place, you would not be believed, and in the second, it might injure me; I should be blamed for negligence. There's a third reason and a good one—namely, that my worthy master, the president of the board, would not give you a single sequin; I doubt if he would even thank you. If you are certain of the truth of your information, as I hope you are, you will gain not only the regard of the Tribunal, but also a considerable pecuniary reward. If, on the other hand, you are mistaken, you are undone, for the infallible Tribunal would never forgive anyone who caused it to make a gross blunder. An hour after the Inquisitors have received your report, the President of the Board of Trade will be furnished with a copy."

"Why a copy?"

"Because you name yourself and none must know the informers of their infallible high and mightinesses."

"I see."

I followed my good friend's excellent advice. I wrote a note to him and sealed my report, addressing it to Marc Antony Businello, secretary of the Tribunal, brother of the secretary under whom I had been imprisoned seventeen years before.

Next morning the governor was delighted to hear that everything had been finished before midnight. He assured me that the consul would not have official information before Saturday. In the meanwhile the consul's uneasy state of mind was quite a trouble to me, for I could not do anything to set him at ease.

Saturday came and Councillor Rizzi told me the news at the club. He seemed in high spirits over it and said that the loss of Venice was Trieste's gain. The consul came in just then and said that the loss

would be a mere trifle for Venice, while the first shipwreck would cost more to Trieste than ten years' duty. The consul seemed to enjoy the whole thing, but that was the part he had to play. In the small trading towns like Trieste, people make a great account of trifles.

I went to dine with the consul, who privately confessed his doubts and fears on the matter. I asked him how the Venetians would parry the blow, and he replied, "They will have a number of very learned consultations, and then they will do nothing at all and the Austrians will send their goods wherever they please."

"But the Government is such a wise one."

"Or rather has the reputation of wisdom."

"Then you think it lives on its reputation?"

"Yes; like all mouldy institutions, they continue to be simply because they have been. Old governments are like those ancient dykes which are rotten at the base and stay in position only by their weight and bulk."

The consul was in the right. He wrote to his chief the same day and in the course of the next week he heard that Their Excellencies had received information of the matter some time before through extraordinary channels. For the present his duties would be confined to sending in any additional information on the same subject.

"I told you so," said the consul. "Now, what do you think of the wisdom of our sages?"

"I think Bedlam or Charenton were their best lodging."

In three weeks the consul received orders to give me another grant of a hundred ducats and to allow me ten sequins a month to encourage me to deserve well of the State.

From that time I felt sure I should be allowed to return in the course of the year, but I was mistaken, for I had to wait till the year following.

This new present and the monthly payment of ten sequins put me at my ease, for I had expensive tastes of which I could not cure myself. I felt pleased at the thought that I was now in the pay of the Tribunal which had punished me and which I had defied. It seemed to me a triumph and I determined to do all in my power for the Republic.

Here I must relate an amusing incident, which delighted everyone in Trieste.

It was in the beginning of summer. I had been eating sardines by the seashore and, when I came home at ten o'clock at night, I was astonished to be greeted by a girl whom I recognised as Count Strasoldo's maid.

The count was a handsome young man, but poor, like most of that name; he was fond of expensive pleasures and was consequently heavily in debt. He had a small appointment, which brought him in an income of six hundred florins, and he had not the slightest difficulty in spending a year's pay in three months. He had agreeable manners and a generous disposition and I had supped with him in company with Baron Pittoni several times. He had in his service a Carniolan girl who was exquisitely pretty, but none of the count's friends attempted

her, as he was very jealous. Like the rest, I had seen and admired her, I had congratulated the count on the possession of such a treasure, in her presence, but I had never addressed a word to her.

Strasoldo had just been summoned to Vienna by Count Auersberg, who liked him and had promised to do what he could for him. He had gotten an employment in Poland, his furniture had been sold, he had taken leave of everyone and nobody doubted that he would take his pretty Carniolan with him. I thought so, too, for I had been to wish him a pleasant journey that morning. My astonishment at finding the girl in my room may be imagined.

"What do you want, my dear?" I asked.

"Forgive me, sir, but I don't want to go with Strasoldo and I thought you would protect me. Nobody will be able to guess where I am and Strasoldo will be obliged to go by himself. You will not be so cruel as to drive me away?"

"No, dearest."

"I promise you I will go away to-morrow, for Strasoldo is going to leave at daybreak."

"My lovely Leuzica (this was her name), no one would refuse you an asylum, I least of all. You are safe here and nobody shall come in without your leave. I am only too happy that you came to me for, if it is true that the count is your lover, you may be sure he will not go so easily. He will stay the whole of to-morrow, at least, in the hope of finding you again."

"No doubt he will look for me everywhere but here. Will you promise not to make me go with him, even if he guesses that I am with you?"

"I swear I will not."

"Then I am satisfied."

"But you will have to share my bed."

"If I shall not inconvenience you, I agree with all my heart."

"You shall see whether you inconvenience me or not. Undress, quick! But where are your things?"

"All that I have is in a small trunk behind the count's carriage, but I don't trouble myself about that."

"The poor count must be raging at this very moment."

"No, for he will not come home till midnight. He is supping with Madame Bissolotti, who is in love with him."

In the meantime Leuzica had undressed and gotten into bed. In a moment I was beside her and, after the severe regimen of the previous eight months, I spent a delicious night in her arms, for of late my pleasures had been few. She was a perfect beauty and worthy to be a king's mistress and, if I had been rich, I would have set up a household, that I might retain her in my service.

We did not awake till seven o'clock. She got up and, on looking out of the window, saw Strasoldo's carriage waiting at the door. I comforted her by saying that, as long as she wished to stay with me, no one could force her away.

I was vexed that I had no closet in my room, as I could not hide her from the waiter who would bring us coffee. We accordingly dispensed with breakfast, but I had to find some way of feeding her. I thought I had plenty of time before me, but I was wrong.

At ten o'clock I saw Strasoldo and his friend Pittoni coming into the inn. They spoke to the landlord and seemed to be searching the whole place, passing from one room to another.

I laughed and told Leuzica that they were looking for her and that our turn would doubtless come before long.

"Remember your promise," said she.

"You may be sure of that."

The tone in which this remark was delivered comforted her and she exclaimed, "Well, let them come; they will get nothing by it."

I heard footsteps approaching and went out, closing the door behind me and begging them to excuse my not asking them in, as there was a contraband commodity in my room.

"Only tell me that it is not my maid," said Strasoldo, in a pitiable voice. "We are sure she is here, as the sentinel at the gate saw her come in at ten o'clock."

"You are right, the fair Carniolan is at this moment in my room. I have given her my word of honour that no violence shall be used, and you may be sure that I shall keep my word."

"I shall certainly not attempt any violence, but I am sure she would come of her own free will if I could speak to her."

"I will ask her if she wishes to see you. Wait a moment."

Leuzica had been listening to our conversation and, when I opened the door, she told me I could let them in.

As soon as Strasoldo appeared, she asked him proudly if she was under any obligations to him, if she had stolen anything from him and if she were not perfectly free to leave him when she liked.

The poor count replied mildly that, on the contrary, it was he who owed her a year's wages and had her box in his possession, but that she should not have left him without giving any reason.

"The only reason is that I don't want to go to Vienna," she replied. "I told you so a week ago. If you are an honest man, you will leave me my trunk and, as to my wages, you can send them to me at my aunt's at Laibach if you haven't any money now."

I pitied Strasoldo from the bottom of my heart; he prayed and entreated and finally wept like a child. However, Pittoni roused my choler by saying that I ought to drive the slut out of my room.

"You are not the man to tell me what I ought and ought not to do," I replied, "and, after I have received her in my apartments, you ought to moderate your expressions."

Seeing that I stood on my dignity, he laughed and asked me if I had fallen in love with her in so short a time. Strasoldo here broke in by saying he was sure she had not slept with me.

"That's where you are mistaken," said she, "for there's only one bed and I did not sleep on the floor."

They found prayers and reproaches alike useless and left at noon. Leuzica was profuse in her expressions of gratitude to me.

There was no longer any mystery, so I boldly ordered dinner for two and promised that she should remain with me till the count had left Trieste.

At three o'clock the Venetian consul came, saying that Count Strasoldo had begged him to use his good offices with me to persuade me to deliver up the fair Leuzica.

"You must speak to the girl herself," I replied. "She came here, and stays here, of her own free will."

When the worthy man had heard the girl's story, he went away, saying that we had the right on our side.

In the evening a porter brought her trunk and at this she seemed touched, but not repentant.

Leuzica supped with me and again shared my couch. The count left Trieste at daybreak. As soon as I was sure that he was gone, I took a carriage and escorted the fair Leuzica two stages on her way to Laibach. We dined together and I left her in the care of a friend of hers.

Everybody said I had acted properly and even Pittoni confessed that in my place he would have done the same.

Poor Strasoldo came to a bad end. He got into debt, committed speculation and had to escape into Turkey and embrace Islam to avoid the penalty of death.

About this time, the Venetian general, Palmanova, accompanied by the procurator Erizzo, came to Trieste to visit the governor, Count Wagensberg. In the afternoon the count presented me to these patri-cians, who seemed astonished to see me in Trieste.

The procurator asked me if I was enjoying myself as well as I had done in Paris sixteen years before, and I told him that sixteen years more and a hundred thousand francs less forced me to live in a different fashion.

While we were talking, the consul came in to announce that the felucca was ready. Madame de Lantieri, as well as her father, pressed me to join the party.

I gave a bow, which might mean either "no" or "yes," and asked the consul what the party was. He told me that they were going to see a Venetian man-of-war at anchor in the harbour; his excellency being the captain there, I immediately turned to the countess and smilingly professed my regret that I was unable to set foot on Venetian soil.

Everybody exclaimed to me:

"You have nothing to fear. You are with honest people. Your suspicion is quite offensive."

"That is all very fine, ladies and gentlemen, and I will come with all my heart, if your excellencies will assure me that my joining this little party will not be known to the State Inquisitors possibly by to-morrow."

This was enough. Everybody looked at me in silence and no objections could be found to my argument.

The captain of the vessel, who did not know me, spoke a few whispered words to the others and then they left.

The next day the consul told me that the captain had praised my prudence in declining to go on board, as, if anyone had chanced to tell him my name and my case whilst I was on his ship, it would have been his duty to detain me.

When I told the governor of this remark, he replied gravely that he should not have allowed the ship to leave the harbour.

I saw the procurator Erizzo the same evening and he congratulated me on my discretion, telling me he would take care to let the Tribunal know how I respected its decisions.

During this time I had the pleasure of seeing a beautiful Venetian who was visiting Trieste with several of her admirers. She was of the noble family of Bon and had married Count Romili di Bergamo, who, while remaining her best friend, left her free to do whatever she liked. She drew behind her triumphal chariot an old general, Count Burg-hausen, a famous rake who had deserted Mars for the past ten years in order to devote his remaining days to the service of Venus. He was a delightful man and we became friends. Ten years later he was of service to me.

CHAPTER 145

SOME of the ladies of Trieste thought they would like to act some French comedy and I was made stage manager. I had not only to choose the pieces, but to distribute the parts, the latter being a duty of infinite irksomeness.

All the actresses were new to the boards and I had immense trouble in hearing them repeat their parts, which they seemed unable to learn by heart. It is a well-known fact that the revolution which is really needed in Italy is in female education. The very best families, with few exceptions, are satisfied with shutting up their daughters in a convent for several years till the time comes for them to marry some man, whom they never see till the eve of the day of their marriage. As a consequence, both parties resort to *cicisbeismo*, in order to compensate themselves for these marriages of blind chance, so that, in Italy as in France, the idea that our nobles are the sons of their nominal fathers is a purely conventional one.

What do girls learn in convents, especially in Italian convents? A few mechanical acts of devotion and outward forms, very little real religion, a good deal of deceit, often profligate habits, a little reading and writing, many useless accomplishments, little music and less drawing, no history, geography or mythology, hardly any mathematics and nothing to make a girl a good wife and a good mother.

As for foreign languages, they are unheard of; our own Italian is

so soft that any other tongue is hard to acquire and the *dolce far niente* habit is an obstacle to all assiduous study.

I write down these truths, in spite of my patriotism. I know that, if any of my fellow-countrymen come to read me, they will be very angry; but I shall be beyond the reach of all anger.

To return to our theatricals. As I could not make my actresses get their parts letter-perfect, I became their prompter and found out by experience all the ungratefulness of the position. The actors never acknowledge their debt to the prompter and put down to his account all the mistakes they make.

A Spanish doctor is almost as badly off; if his patient recovers, the cure is set down to the credit of one saint or another; but if he dies, the physician is blamed for his unskillful treatment.

A handsome negress, who served the prettiest of my actresses, to whom I showed great attentions, said to me one day, "I can't make out how you can be so much in love with my mistress, who is as white as the Devil."

"Have you never loved a white man?" I asked.

"Yes," said she, "but only because I had no negro, to whom I should certainly have given the preference."

Soon after, the negress became mine and I found out the falsity of the axiom, *Sublata lucerna nullum discrimen inter feminas*, for even *sublata lucerna* a man would know a black woman from a white one.

I feel quite sure myself that the negroes are a distinct species from ourselves. There is one essential difference, leaving the colour out of account—namely, that a properly trained African woman possesses the faculty of not conceiving during copulation and even of conceiving a male or a female child, as she pleases. No doubt my readers will disbelieve this assertion and they would be quite right, because, according to our nature, the thing is unbelievable; but their credulity would cease if I instructed them in this megalanthropogenesical science of the negresses.

Count Rosenberg, a grand chamberlain of the Emperor, came on a visit to Trieste, in company with an Abbé Casti, whose acquaintance I wished to make on account of some extremely blasphemous poems he had written. However, I was disappointed; instead of a man of parts, I found the abbé to be an impudent, worthless fellow, whose only merit was a knack of versification.

Count Rosenberg took the abbé with him, because he was useful in the capacities of fool and pimp—occupations well suited to his morals, though by no means agreeable to his ecclesiastical status. In those days, syphilis had not completely destroyed his uvula.

I heard that this shameless profligate, this paltry poetaster, had been named poet to the Emperor. What a dishonour to the memory of the great Metastasio, a man free from all vices, adorned with all virtues and of the most singular ability!

Casti had neither a fine style, nor a knowledge of dramatic requirements, as appears from two or three comic operas composed by him.

in which the reader will find nothing but foolish buffooneries, badly put together. In one of these comic operas, he makes use of slander against Theodore and the Venetian Republic, which he turns into ridicule by means of pitiful lies.

In another piece, called "The Cave of Trophonius," Casti made himself the laughing-stock of the literary world by making a display of useless learning, which contributes nothing towards the plot.

Among the persons of quality who came to Gorizia to enjoy the French plays (which were given at the house of the baron of Königsbrunn, whose charming wife, *née* Countess Almis, played the leading parts) I met a certain Count Torriano, who persuaded me to spend the autumn with him at a country house of his, six miles from Gorizia. If I had listened to the voice of my good genius, I should certainly never have gone.

The count was under thirty and not married. He could not exactly be called ugly, in spite of his hang-dog countenance, in which I saw the outward signs of cruelty, disloyalty, treason, pride, brutal sensuality, hatred and jealousy. The mixture of bad qualities was such an appalling one that I thought his physiognomy was at fault and the goods better than the label. He asked me to come and see him so graciously that I concluded that the man gave the lie to his face.

I asked about him before accepting the invitation and heard nothing but good. People, it is true, said he was fond of the fair sex and was a fierce avenger of any wrong done him but, not thinking either of these characteristics unworthy of a gentleman, I accepted his invitation. He told me he would expect me to meet him at Gorizia on the first day of September and the next day we would leave for his estate.

In consequence of Torriano's invitation, I took leave of everybody, especially of Count Wagensberg, who had a serious attack of that malady which yields so easily to mercury when it is administered by a skilled hand, but which kills the unfortunate who falls amongst quacks. Such was the fate of the poor count; he died a month after I had left Trieste.

I left Trieste in the morning, dined at Proseco and reached Gorizia in good time. I called at Count Louis Torriano's mansion, but was told he was out. However, they allowed me to deposit what little luggage I had when I informed them that the count had invited me. I then went to see Count Torres and stayed with him till supper-time.

When I got back to the count's, I was told he was in the country and would not be back till the next day and that in the meantime my trunks had been taken to the inn, where a room and supper had been ordered.

I was extremely astonished and went to the inn, where I was served with a bad supper in an uncomfortable room; however, I supposed that the count had been unable to accommodate me in his house and I excused him, though I wished he had forewarned me. I could not understand how a gentleman who has a house and invites a friend can be without a room wherein to lodge him.

The next morning, Count Torriano came to see me, thanked me for my punctuality, congratulated himself on the pleasure he expected to derive from my society and told me he was very sorry we could not start for two days, as a suit was to be heard the next day between himself and a rascally old farmer, who was trying to cheat him.

"Well," said I, "I will go and hear the pleadings; it will be an amusement for me."

Soon after he took his leave without asking me where I intended dining or apologising for not having accommodated me at his house.

I could not make him out, I thought he might have taken offence at my landing at his door without having given him warning.

"Come, come, Casanova," I said to myself, "you may be all abroad. Knowledge of character is an unfathomable gulf. We thought we had studied it deeply, but there is still more to learn; we shall see. He may have said nothing, out of delicacy, I should be sorry to be found wanting in politeness, though, indeed, I am puzzled to know what I have done amiss."

I dined by myself, made calls in the afternoon and supped with Count Torres. I told him that I promised myself the pleasure of hearing the eloquence of the bar of Gorizia the next day.

"I shall be there, too," said he, "as I am curious to see what sort of a face Torriano will put on if the countryman wins. I know something about the case," he continued, "and Torriano is sure of victory unless the documents he has submitted, attesting the farmer's indebtedness, happen to be forgeries. On the other hand, the farmer ought to win unless it can be shown that the receipts signed by Torriano are forgeries. The farmer has lost in the first court and in the second, but he has paid the costs and appealed from both, though he is a poor man. If he loses to-morrow, he will not only be a ruined man, but will be sentenced to penal servitude, while, if he wins, Torriano should be sent to the galleys, together with his counsel, who has deserved this fate many times before."

I knew Count Torres passed for somewhat of a scandal-monger, so his remarks made little impression on me beyond whetting my curiosity. The next day, I was one of the first to appear in the court, where I found the bench, plaintiff, defendant and barristers already assembled. The farmer's counsel was an old man who looked honest, while the count's had all the impudence of a practised knave. The count sat beside him, smiling disdainfully, as if he were lowering himself to strive with a miserable peasant whom he had already twice vanquished.

The farmer sat by his wife, his son and two daughters and had that air of modest assurance which indicates resignation and a good conscience. I wondered how such honest people could have lost in two courts; I was sure their cause must be a just one. They were all poorly clad and, from their downcast eyes and humble looks, I guessed them to be the victims of oppression.

Each barrister could speak for two hours. The farmer's advocate

spoke for thirty minutes, which he occupied by putting in the various receipts bearing the count's signature, up to the time when he had dismissed the farmer because he would not prostitute his daughters to him. He then continued, speaking with calm precision, to point out the anachronisms and contradictions in the count's books (which made his client a debtor) and stated that his client was in a position to prosecute the two forgers who had been employed by the count to concoct the infamous fraudulent documents which the counsel for the opposing side had the audacity to submit to the judge in order to deceive his good faith and compass the ruin of an honest family, whose only crime was poverty. He ended his speech by an appeal for costs in all the suits and for compensation for loss of time and defamation of character.

The harangue of the count's advocate would have lasted more than two hours if the court had not silenced him. He indulged in a torrent of abuse against the other barrister, the experts in handwriting and the peasant, whom he threatened with a speedy consignment to the galleys.

The pleadings would have wearied me if I had been a blind man but, as it was, I amused myself by a scrutiny of the various physiognomies before me. My host's face remained smiling and impudent through it all.

The pleadings over, the court was cleared and we awaited the decision in the adjoining room.

The peasant and his family sat in a corner apart, sad, sorry and comfortless, with no friend to speak a consoling word, while the count was surrounded by a courtly throng, who assured him that with such a case he could not possibly lose, but that, if the court did deliver judgment against him, he should pay the peasant and force him to prove the alleged forgery.

I listened in profound silence, sympathising with the countryman rather than my host, whom I believed to be a thorough-paced scoundrel, though I took care not to say so.

Count Torres, who was a deadly foe to all prudence and discretion, asked me my opinion of the case and I whispered that I thought the count should lose, even if he were in the right, on account of the infamous apostrophes of his counsel, who deserved to have his ears cut off or to stand in the pillory for six months.

And the client, too, said Torres aloud. But nobody had heard what I had said.

After we had waited an hour, the clerk of the court came in with two papers, one of which he gave to the peasant's counsel and the other to Torriano's. Torriano read it to himself, burst into a loud laugh and then read it aloud.

The court condemned the count to recognise the peasant as his creditor, pay all costs and give him a year's wages as damages, the peasant's right to appeal *ad minimum* on account of any other complaints he might have being reserved.

The advocate looked downcast, but Torriano consoled him with a fee of six sequins and everybody went away.

I remained with the defendant and asked him if he meant to appeal to Vienna.

"I shall appeal in another way," said he. But I did not ask him what he meant.

We left Gorizia the next morning. My landlord gave me the bill and told me he had received instructions not to insist on my paying it if I made any objection as, in that case, the count would pay himself. This struck me as somewhat eccentric, but I only laughed. However, the specimens I had seen of his character made me imagine that I was going to spend six weeks with a dangerous eccentric.

In two hours, we were at Spessa and alighted at a large house, with nothing distinguished about it from an architectural point of view. We went up to the count's room, which was tolerably furnished, and, after showing me over the house, he took me to my own room. It was on the ground floor, stuffy, dark and ill-furnished.

"Ah!" said he, "this is the room my poor old father used to love to sit in; like you, he was very fond of study. You may be sure of enjoying perfect liberty here, for you will see no one."

We had dined late and consequently no supper was served that day. The eating and the wine were tolerable, and so was the company of a priest who held the position of the count's steward, but I was disgusted at hearing the count, who ate ravenously, reproach me with eating too slowly.

When we rose from table, he told me he had a lot to do and that we should see each other the next day. I went to my room to put things in order and to get out my papers. I was then working at the second volume of the Polish troubles.

In the evening, I asked for a light, as it was growing dark, and presently a servant came with one candle. I was indignant; they ought to have given me wax lights or a lamp, at least. However, I made no complaint, merely asking one of the servants if I was to rely on the services of any amongst them.

"Our master has given us no instructions on the subject, but of course we will wait on you whenever you call us."

This would have been a troublesome task, as there was no bell and I should have been obliged to wander all over the house and search the courtyard, and perhaps the road, whenever I wanted a servant.

"And who will do my room?" I asked.

"The maid."

"Then she has a key of her own?"

"There is no need for a key, as your door has no lock, but you can bolt yourself in at night."

I could only laugh, whether from ill humour or amusement I really cannot say. However, I made no remark to the man.

I began my task, but, in half an hour, I was so unfortunate as to put the candle out whilst snuffing it. I could not roam about the house

in the dark, searching for a light, as I did not know my way, so I went to bed in the dark, more inclined to swear than to laugh. Fortunately, the bed was a good one and, as I had expected it to be uncomfortable, I went to sleep in a more tranquil humour.

In the morning nobody came to attend on me, so I got up and, after putting away my papers, went to say good morning to my host in dressing-gown and nightcap. I found him under the hand of one of his men, who served him as a valet. I told him I had slept well and had come to breakfast with him, but he said he never took breakfast, and asked me, politely enough, not to trouble to come and see him in the morning, as he was always engaged with his tenants, who were a pack of thieves. He then added that, as I took breakfast, he would give orders to the cook to send me ~~up~~ coffee whenever I liked.

"You will also be kind enough to tell your man to give me a touch with his comb after he has done with you."

"I wonder you did not bring a servant."

"If I had guessed that I should be troubling you, I would certainly have brought one."

"It will not trouble me but you, for you will be kept waiting."

"Not at all. Another thing I want is a lock to my door, for I have important papers, for which I am responsible, and I cannot lock them up in my trunk whenever I leave my room."

"Everything is safe in my house."

"Of course, but you see how absurd it would be for you to be answerable in case any of my papers were missing. I might be in the greatest distress and yet I should never tell you of it."

He remained silent for some time and then ordered his man to tell the priest to put a lock on my door and give me the key.

While I was thinking, I noticed a taper and a book on the table beside his bed. I went up to it and asked politely if I might see what kind of reading had beguiled him to sleep. He replied as politely, requesting me not to touch it. I withdrew immediately, telling him with a smile that I felt sure it was a book of prayers, but that I would never reveal his secret.

"You have guessed what it is," he said, laughing.

I left him with a courteous bow, begging him to send me his man and a cup of coffee, chocolate or broth, it mattered not which.

I went back to my room, meditating seriously on his strange behaviour and especially on the wretched tallow candle which was given me, while he had a wax taper. My first idea was to leave the house immediately for, though I had only fifty ducats in my possession, my spirit was as high as when I was a rich man; but, on second thought, I determined not to put myself in the wrong by affronting him in such a signal manner.

The tallow candle was the most grievous wrong, so I resolved to ask the man whether he had not been told to give me wax lights. This was important, as it might be only a piece of knavery or stupidity on the part of the servant

The man came in an hour with a cup of coffee, sugared according to his taste or that of the cook. This disgusted me, so I let it stay on the table, telling him with a burst of laughter (if I had not laughed, I must have thrown the coffee in his face) that that was not the way to serve breakfast. I then got ready to have my hair done.

I asked him why he had brought me a wretched tallow candle, instead of two wax lights.

"Sir," the worthy man replied humbly, "I could only give you what the priest gave me, I received a wax taper for my master and a candle for you."

I was sorry to have vexed the poor fellow and said no more, thinking the priest might have taken a fancy to economise for the count's profit or his own. I determined to question him on the subject.

As soon as I was dressed, I went out to walk off my bad humour. I met the priest-steward, who had been to the locksmith. He told me that the man had no ready-made locks, but he was going to fit my door with a padlock, of which I should have the key.

"Provided I can lock my door," I said, "I care not how it's done."

I returned to the house to see the padlock fitted and, while the blacksmith was hammering away, I asked the priest why he had given me a tallow candle, instead of one or two wax tapers.

"I should never dare to give you tapers, sir, without express orders from the count."

"I should have thought such a thing would go without saying."

"Yes, in other houses, but here nothing goes without saying. I have to buy the tapers and he pays me and, every time he gets one, it is noted down."

"Then you can give me a pound of wax lights if I pay you for them?"

"Of course, but I think I must tell the count, for you know . . ."

"Yes, I know all about it, but I don't care."

I gave him the price of a pound of wax lights and went for a walk, as he told me dinner was at one. I was somewhat astonished, on coming back to the house at half-past twelve, to be told that the count had been half an hour at table.

I did not know what to make of all these acts of rudeness, however, I moderated my passion once more and came in, remarking that the abbé had told me dinner was at one.

"It is usually," replied the count, "but to-day I wanted to pay some calls and take you with me, so I decided on dining at noon. You will have plenty of time."

He then gave orders for all the dishes that had been taken away to be brought back.

I made no answer and sat down to table and, feigning good humour, ate what was on the table, refusing to touch those dishes which had been taken away. He vainly asked me to try some soup, the beef, the entrées, I told him I always punished myself thus when I came in late for a nobleman's dinner.

Still dissembling my ill humour, I got into his carriage to accom-

pany him on his round of visits. He took me to Baron del Mestre, who spent the whole of the year in the country with his family, keeping up a good establishment.

The count passed the whole of the day with the baron, putting off the other visits to a future time. In the evening we returned to Spessa. Soon after we arrived, the priest returned the money I had given him for the candles, telling me that the count had forgotten to inform him that I was to be treated as himself. I took this acknowledgment for what it was worth.

Supper was served and I ate with the appetite of four, while the count hardly ate at all.

The servant who escorted me to my room asked me at what time I should like breakfast. I told him and he was punctual and this time the coffee was brought in the coffee-pot and the sugar was separate.

The valet did my hair and the maid did my room, everything was changed and I imagined that I had given the count a little lesson and would have no more trouble with him. Here, however, I was mistaken, as the reader will discover.

Three or four days later the priest came to me one morning to ask when I would like dinner, as I was to dine in my room.

"Why so?" I asked.

"Because the count left yesterday for Gorizia, telling me he did not know when he should come back. He ordered me to give you your meals in your room."

No one could be more in favour of liberty and independence than I, but I could not help feeling that my rough host should have told me he was going to Gorizia. He stayed a week and I should have died of *ennui*, if it had not been for my daily visits to the Baron del Mestre. Otherwise, there was no company, the priest was an uneducated man and there were no pretty country girls. I felt as if I could not bear another four weeks of such a doleful exile. When the count came back, I spoke to him plainly.

"I came to Spessa," I said, "to keep you company and amuse myself, but I see that I am in the way, so I hope you will take me back to Gorizia and leave me there. You must know that I like society as much as you do and I do not feel inclined to die of *ennui* in your house."

He assured me that it should not happen again, that he had gone to Gorizia to meet an actress who had come there purposely to see him and that he had also profited by the opportunity to sign a contract of marriage with a Venetian lady.

These excuses and the apparently polite tone in which they were uttered induced me to prolong my stay with the extraordinary count. He drew the whole of his income from vineyards, which produced an excellent white wine, bringing him in a revenue of a thousand sequins a year. However, as the count did his best to spend double that amount, he was rapidly ruining himself. He had a fixed impression that all the tenants were robbing him, so he prowled about everywhere, entered their homes and, whenever he found a bunch of grapes in a cottage,

proceeded to beat the occupants unless they could prove that the grapes did not come from his vineyards. The peasants might kneel down and beg pardon, but they were thrashed all the same.

I had been an unwilling witness of several of these arbitrary and cruel actions, when one day I had the pleasure of seeing the count soundly beaten by two peasants. He had struck the first blow himself but, when he found that he was getting the worst of it, he prudently took to his heels.

He was much offended with me for remaining a mere spectator of the fray, but I told him very coolly that, being the aggressor, he was in the wrong and, in the second place, I was not going to expose myself to be beaten to a jelly by two lusty peasants in another man's quarrel. These arguments did not satisfy him and in his rage he dared to tell me that I was a scurvy coward not to know that it was my duty to defend a friend to the death.

In spite of these offensive remarks, I merely replied with a glance of contempt, which he doubtless understood.

Before long, the whole village had heard what had happened and the joy was universal, for the count had the singular privilege of being feared by all and loved by none. The two rebellious peasants had taken to their heels. But, when it became known that his lordship had announced his resolution to carry pistols with him in all future visits, everybody was alarmed and two spokesmen were sent to the count, informing him that all his tenants would quit the estate in a week's time unless he gave them a promise to leave them in peace in their humble abodes.

The rude eloquence of the two peasants struck me as sublime, but the count pronounced them to be impertinent and ridiculous.

"We have as good right to taste the vines which we have watered with the sweat of our brow," said they, "as your cook has to taste the dishes before they are served on your table."

The threat of deserting just at the vintage season frightened the count and he had to give in and the embassy went its way, in high glee at its success.

The next Sunday we went to the chapel to hear mass and, when we came in, the priest was at the altar, finishing the Credo. The count looked furious and after mass he took me with him to the sacristy and began to abuse and beat the poor priest, in spite of the surplice which he was still wearing. It was really a shocking sight.

The priest spat in his face and cried "Help!"—that being the only revenge in his power.

Several persons ran in, so we left the sacristy. I was scandalised and told the count that the priest would be certain to go to Udine and it might turn out a very awkward business.

"Try to prevent his doing so," I added, "even by violence, but first endeavour to pacify him."

No doubt the count was afraid, for he called out to his servants and ordered them to fetch the priest, whether he would come or no.

His order was executed and the priest was led in, foaming with rage, cursing the count, calling him an excommunicated wretch whose very breath was poisonous, swearing that never another mass should be sung in the chapel that had been polluted with sacrilege and finally promising that the archbishop would avenge him. The count let him say on and then forced him into a chair and the unworthy ecclesiastic not only ate, but got drunk. Thus peace was concluded and the abbé forgot all his wrongs.

A few days later two Capuchins came to visit the count at noon. They did not go and, as he did not care to dismiss them, dinner was served without any place being laid for the friars. Thereupon the bolder of the two informed the count that they had had no dinner. Without replying, the count had him accommodated with a plateful of rice. The Capuchin refused it, saying that he was worthy to sit not only at his table, but at a monarch's. The count, who happened to be in good humour, replied that they called themselves "unworthy brethren" and that they were consequently not worthy of any of this world's good things.

The Capuchin made but a poor answer and, as I thought the count to be in the right, I proceeded to back him up, telling the friar he ought to be ashamed at having committed the sin of pride, so strictly condemned by the rules of his order.

The Capuchin answered me with a torrent of abuse, so the count ordered a pair of scissors to be brought, that the beards of the filthy rogues might be cut off. At this awful threat the two friars made their escape and we laughed heartily over the incident.

If all the count's eccentricities had been of this comparatively harmless and amusing nature, I should not have minded, but such was far from being the case.

Instead of chyle, his organs must have distilled some virulent poison; he was always at his worst in his after-dinner hours. His appetite was furious; he ate more like a tiger than a man. One day, each of us having a succulent woodcock on his plate, I could not help praising the dish, in the style of the true gourmand. He, however, took up his bird, tore it limb from limb, as a famished falcon might have done, and gravely bade me to eat in silence and hold my tongue, as my praise of the dishes I liked irritated him.

I felt an inclination to laugh and also an inclination to throw a bottle at his head, which latter inclination I should probably have indulged, had I been twenty years younger. However, I did neither, feeling that I should either leave him or accommodate myself to his humours.

Three months later Madame Costa, the actress whom he had gone to see at Gorizia, told me she would never have believed in the possibility of such a creature existing if she had not known Count Torriano.

"Though he is a vigorous lover," she continued, "it is a matter of great difficulty with him to obtain the crisis and the wretched woman in his arms is in imminent danger of being strangled to death if she

cannot conceal her amorous ecstasy. He cannot bear to see another's pleasure. I pity most heartily the woman destined to be his wife."

I will now relate the incident which put an end to my relations with this venomous creature.

Amidst the idleness and weariness of Spessa, I happened to meet a very pretty and agreeable young widow. I made her some small presents and finally persuaded her to pass the night in my room. She came at midnight to avoid observation and left at daybreak by a small door which opened on the road.

We had amused ourselves in this pleasant manner for about a week when one morning my sweetheart awoke me, that I might close the door after her as usual. I had scarcely done so when I heard cries for help. I quickly opened the door again and saw the scoundrelly Torriano, holding the widow with one hand, while he beat her furiously with a stick in the other. I rushed upon him and we fell together, while the poor woman made her escape.

I had only my dressing-gown on and here I was at a disadvantage, for civilised man is a poor creature without his clothes. However, I held the stick with one hand, while I squeezed his throat with the other. On his side, he clung to the stick with his right hand and pulled my hair with the left. At last his tongue started out and he had to let go.

I was on my feet again in an instant and, seizing the stick, I aimed a sturdy blow at his head, which, luckily for him, he partially parried. I did not strike again, so he got up, ran a little way and began to pick up stones. However, I did not wait to be pelted, but shut myself in my room and lay down on the bed, only sorry I had not choked the villain outright.

As soon as I had rested, I looked to my pistols, dressed and went out, with the intention of looking for some kind of conveyance to take me back to Gorizia. Without knowing it, I took a road that led me to the cottage of the poor widow, whom I found looking calm, though sad. She told me she had received most of the blows on her shoulders and was not much hurt. What vexed her was that the affair would become public, as two peasants had seen the count beating her and our subsequent combat.

I gave her two sequins, begging her to come to see me at Gorizia and to tell me where I could find a conveyance.

Her sister offered to show me the way to a farm where I could get what I wanted. On the way she told me that Torriano had been her sister's enemy before the death of her husband, because she rejected all his proposals.

I found a good conveyance at the farm and the man promised to drive me to Gorizia by dinner-time. I gave him half-a-crown as an earnest and went away, telling him to come for me. I returned to the count's and had scarcely finished getting ready when the conveyance drove up. I was about to put my luggage in it when a servant came from the count, asking me to give him a moment's conversation.

I wrote a note in French, saying that, after what had passed, we ought not to meet again under his roof. A minute later, he came into my room and shut the door, saying, "As you won't speak to me, I have come to speak to you."

"What have you got to say?"

"If you leave my house in this fashion, you will dishonour me and I will not allow it."

"Excuse me, but I should very much like to see how you are going to prevent me from leaving your house."

"I will not allow you to go by yourself; we must go together."

"Certainly. I understand you perfectly. Get your sword or your pistols and we will start directly. There is room for two in the carriage."

"That won't do. You must dine with me and then we can go in my carriage."

"You are mistaken. I should be a fool if I dined with you when our miserable dispute is all over the village; to-morrow it will have reached Gorizia."

"If you won't dine with me, I will dine with you and people may say what they like. We will go after dinner, so send away that conveyance."

I had to give in to him. The wretched count stayed with me till noon, endeavouring to persuade me that he had a perfect right to beat a countrywoman in the road and that I was altogether wrong. I laughed and said I wondered how he derived his right to beat a free woman anywhere and that his pretence that I, being her lover, had no right to protect her was a monstrous one.

"She had just left my arms," I continued. "Was I not therefore her natural protector? Only a coward or a monster like yourself would have remained indifferent, though, indeed, I believe that even you would have done the same."

A few minutes before we sat down to dinner, he said that neither of us would profit by the adventure, as he meant the duel to be to the death.

"I don't agree with you, as far as I am concerned," I replied. "And, as to duel, you can fight or not fight, as you please; for my part, I have had satisfaction. If we come to a duel, I hope to leave you in the land of the living, though I shall do my best to lay you up for a considerable time, so that you may have leisure to reflect on your folly. On the other hand, if fortune favours you, you may act as you please."

"We will go into the wood by ourselves and my coachman shall have orders to drive you wherever you like if you come out of the wood by yourself."

"Very good indeed; and which would you prefer, swords or pistols?"

"Swords, I think."

"Then I promise to unload my pistols as soon as we get into the carriage."

I was astonished to find the usually brutal count become quite polite at the prospect of a duel. I felt perfectly confident myself, as I was sure of flooring him at the first stroke by a peculiar lunge. Then I could escape through Venetian territory, where I was not known. But I had good reasons for supposing that the duel would end in smoke, like so many other duels when one of the parties is a coward, and a coward I believed the count to be.

We started after an excellent dinner, the count having no luggage and mine being strapped behind the carriage.

I took care to draw the charges of my pistols before the count.

I had heard him tell the coachman to drive towards Gorizia, but, every moment I expected him to order the man to drive up this or that turning, that we might settle our differences.

I asked no questions, feeling that the initiative lay with him; but we drove on till we were at the gates of Gorizia and I burst out laughing when I heard the count order the coachman to drive to the posting-inn.

As soon as we got there, he said:

"You were in the right; we must remain friends. Promise not to tell anyone of what has happened."

I gave him the promise, we shook hands and everything was over.

The next day I took up my abode in one of the quietest streets to finish my second volume on the Polish troubles, but I still managed to enjoy myself during my stay in Gorizia. At last I resolved on returning to Trieste, where I had more chances of serving and pleasing the State Inquisitors.

I stayed at Gorizia till the end of the year 1773 and passed an extremely pleasant six weeks.

My adventure at Spessa had become public property. At first everybody addressed me on the subject but, as I laughed and treated the whole thing as a joke, it soon was forgotten. Torriano took care to be most polite whenever we met, but I had stamped him as a dangerous character and, whenever he asked me to dinner or supper, I had always other engagements.

During the carnival he married the young lady of whom he had spoken to me and as long as he lived, her life was a misery. Fortunately he died a madman thirteen or fourteen years after.

Whilst I was in Gorizia, Count Charles Coronini contributed greatly to my enjoyment. He died four years later. A month before his death, he sent me his will in octosyllabic Italian verses, a specimen of philosophic mirth which I still preserve. It is full of jest and wit, though I believe, if he had guessed the near approach of death, he would not have been so cheerful, for the prospect of imminent destruction can enliven only the heart of a maniac.

During my stay in Gorizia a certain M. Richard Lorrain came to live there. He was a bachelor of forty, who had done good financial service under the Viennese Government and had now retired with a comfortable pension. He was a fine man and his agreeable manners and excellent

education procured him admission into the best company in the town. I met him at the house of Count Torres and soon after he was married to the young countess.

In October the new Council of Ten and the new Inquisitors took office and my protectors wrote me that, if they could not obtain my pardon in the course of the next twelve months, they would be inclined to despair. The first of the Inquisitors was Sagredo, an intimate friend of the procurator Morosini; the second, Grimani, friend of my good Dandolo; and M. Zaguri wrote me that he would answer for the third, who, according to law, was one of the six councillors who assist the Council of Ten.

It may not be generally known that the Council of Ten is really a council of seventeen, as the Doge has always a right to be present.

I returned to Trieste, determined to do my best for the Tribunal, for I longed to return to Venice after nineteen years' wanderings.

I was then forty-nine and I expected no more of Fortune's gifts, as that coy and capricious deity loves and favours only the young and abhors those of ripe years. I thought, however, that I might live comfortably and independently in Venice. I had talents and experience; I hoped to make use of them and I thought the Inquisitors would feel bound to give me some sufficient employment.

I was writing the history of the Polish troubles; the first volume was printed, the second was in preparation and I thought of concluding the work in seven volumes. After that I had a translation of the *Iliad* in view and other literary projects would no doubt present themselves.

In fine, I thought myself sure of a living in Venice, where many persons who would be beggars elsewhere continue to live at their ease.

I left Gorizia on the last day of December, 1773, and on January 1st took up my abode in Trieste.

I could not have received a warmer welcome. Baron Pittoni, the Venetian consul, all the town councillors and the members of the club seemed delighted to see me again. My carnival was a pleasant one and in the beginning of Lent I published the second volume of my work on Poland.

The chief object of interest to me in Trieste was an actress in a company that was playing there. She was no other than the daughter of the so-called Count Rinaldi and my readers may remember her under the name of Irene. I had loved her in Milan and neglected her in Genoa, on account of her father's misdeeds, and in Avignon I had rescued her at Marcoline's request. Eleven years had passed by since I had heard of her.

I was astonished to see her and I think more sorry than glad, for she was still beautiful and I might fall in love again and, being no longer in a position to give her assistance, the outcome might be unfortunate for me. However, I called on her the next day and was greeted with a shriek of delight. She told me she had seen me at the theatre and felt sure I would come to see her.

She introduced me to her husband, who played parts like Scapin, and to her nine-year-old daughter, who had a talent for dancing.

She gave me an abridged account of her life since we had met. In the year I had seen her in Avignon, she had gone to Turin with her father. In Turin she fell in love with her present husband and left her parents to join her lot with his.

"Since then," she said, "I have heard of my father's death, but I do not know what has become of my mother."

After some further conversation she told me she was a faithful wife, though she did not push fidelity so far as to drive a rich lover to despair.

"I have no lovers here," she added, "but I give little suppers to a few friends. I don't mind the expense, as I win some money at faro."

She was the banker and she begged me to join the party now and then.

"I will come after the theatre to-night," I replied, "but you must not expect any high play of me."

I kept the appointment and supped with a number of silly young tradesmen, who were all in love with her.

After supper she held a bank and I was greatly astonished when I saw her cheating with great dexterity. It made me want to laugh; nevertheless, I lost my florins with good grace and left. However, I did not mean to let Irene think she was duping me and I went to see her the next morning at rehearsal and complimented her on her dealing. She pretended not to understand what I meant and, on my explaining myself, she had the impudence to tell me I was mistaken.

In my anger I turned my back on her, saying, "You will be sorry for this some day."

At this, she began to laugh and said, "Well, I confess and, if you will tell me how much you lost, you shall have it back and, if you like, you shall be a partner in the game."

"No, thank you, Irene, I will not be present at any more of your suppers. But I warn you to be cautious; games of chance are strictly forbidden."

"I know that, but all the young men have promised strict secrecy."

"I shall not go to sup with you any more, but you will give me pleasure if you will come and breakfast with me whenever you have the time."

A few days later she came, bringing her daughter with her. The girl was pretty and allowed me to caress her. Thereafter she came again several times and one day met Baron Pittoni, who, like me, had a taste for young girls and became interested in Irene's daughter and begged the mother occasionally to do him the same honour she did me.

I advised her not to reject the offer and the baron fell in love with her, which was a piece of luck for Irene, for toward the end of the carnival she was accused of conducting illicit games and the baron would have abandoned her to the rigours of the police regulations if

he had not been her lover. As it was, he warned her in good season and they could do nothing to her because, when the police officials presented themselves at her house, there was no one there.

Irene left Trieste at the beginning of Lent with the company to which she belonged. Three years later I saw her again in Padua. Her daughter had become a charming girl and our acquaintance was renewed in the tenderest manner.

HERE END ABRUPTLY THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

THE END